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Armadale.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

THE MYSTERY OF OZIAS MIDWINTER.



N a warm May night, in the year eighteen hundred and fifty-one, the Reverend Decimus Brock—at that time a visitor to the Isle of Man—retired to his bedroom, at Castletown, with a serious personal responsibility in close pursuit of him, and with no distinct idea of the means by which he might relieve himself from the pressure of his present circumstances.

The clergyman had reached that mature period of human life at which a sensible man learns to decline (as often as his temper will let him) all useless conflict with the tyranny of his own troubles. Abandoning any further effort to reach a decision in the emergency

that now beset him, Mr. Brock sat down placidly in his shirt-sleeves on the side of his bed, and applied his mind to consider next, whether the

emergency itself was as serious as he had hitherto been inclined to think it. Following this new way out of his perplexities, Mr. Brock found himself unexpectedly travelling to the end in view, by the least inspiriting of all human journeys—a journey through the past years of his own life.

One by one, the events of those years—all connected with the same little group of characters, and all more or less answerable for the anxiety which was now intruding itself between the clergyman and his night's rest—rose, in progressive series, on Mr. Brock's memory. The first of the series took him back through a period of fourteen years, to his own rectory on the Somersetshire shores of the Bristol Channel, and closeted him at a private interview with a lady, who had paid him a visit in the character of a total stranger to the parson and the place.

The lady's complexion was fair, the lady's figure was well-preserved; she was still a young woman, and she looked even younger than her age. There was a shade of melancholy in her expression, and an under-tone of suffering in her voice—enough, in each case, to indicate that she had known trouble, but not enough to obtrude that trouble on the notice of others. She brought with her a fine, fair-haired boy of eight years old, whom she presented as her son, and who was sent out of the way, at the beginning of the interview, to amuse himself in the rectory garden. Her card had preceded her entrance into the study, and had announced her under the name of "Mrs. Armadale." Mr. Brock began to feel interested in her before she had opened her lips; and when the son had been dismissed, he waited, with some anxiety, to hear what the mother had to say to him.

Mrs. Armadale began by informing the rector that she was a widow. Her husband had perished by shipwreck, a short time after their union, on the voyage from Madeira to Lisbon. She had been brought to England, after her affliction, under her father's protection; and her child—a posthumous son—had been born on the family estate in Norfolk. Her father's death, shortly afterwards, had deprived her of her only surviving parent, and had exposed her to neglect and misconstruction on the part of her remaining relatives (two brothers), which had estranged her from them, she feared, for the rest of her days. For some time past, she had lived in the neighbouring county of Devonshire, devoting herself to the education of her boy—who had now reached an age at which he required other than his mother's teaching. Leaving out of the question her own unwillingness to part with him, in her solitary position, she was especially anxious that he should not be thrown among strangers by being sent to school. Her darling project was to bring him up privately at home, and to keep him, as he advanced in years, from all contact with the temptations and the dangers of the world. With these objects in view, her longer sojourn in her own locality (where the services of the resident clergyman, in the capacity of tutor, were not obtainable) must come to an end. She had made inquiries, had heard of a house that would suit her in Mr. Brock's neighbourhood, and had also been told that

Mr. Brock himself had formerly been in the habit of taking pupils. Possessed of this information, she had ventured to present herself, with references that vouched for her respectability, but without a formal introduction; and she had now to ask whether (in the event of her residing in the neighbourhood) any terms that could be offered would induce Mr. Brock to open his doors once more to a pupil, and to allow that pupil to be her son.

If Mrs. Armadale had been a woman of no personal attractions, or if Mr. Brock had been provided with an entrenchment to fight behind, in the shape of a wife, it is probable that the widow's journey might have been taken in vain. As things really were, the rector examined the references which were offered to him, and asked time for consideration. When the time had expired, he did what Mrs. Armadale wished him to do—he offered his back to the burden, and let the mother load him with the responsibility of the son.

This was the first event of the series; the date of it being the year eighteen hundred and thirty-seven. Mr. Brock's memory, travelling forward towards the present from that point, picked up the second event in its turn, and stopped next at the year eighteen hundred and forty-five.

The fishing village on the Somersetshire coast was still the scene; and the characters were once again—Mrs. Armadale and her son. Through the eight years that had passed, Mr. Brock's responsibility had rested on him lightly enough. The boy had given his mother and his tutor but little trouble. He was certainly slow over his books—but more from a constitutional inability to fix his attention on his tasks than from want of capacity to understand them. His temperament, it could not be denied, was heedless to the last degree: he acted recklessly on his first impulses, and rushed blindfold at all his conclusions. On the other hand, it was to be said in his favour, that his disposition was open as the day; a more generous, affectionate, sweet-tempered lad it would have been hard to find anywhere. A certain quaint originality of character, and a natural healthiness in all his tastes, carried him free of most of the dangers to which his mother's system of education inevitably exposed him. He had a thoroughly English love of the sea and of all that belongs to it; and, as he grew in years, there was no luring him away from the waterside, and no keeping him out of the boat-builder's yard. In course of time his mother caught him actually working there, to her infinite annoyance and surprise, as a volunteer. He acknowledged that his whole future ambition was to have a yard of his own, and that his one present object was to learn to build a boat for himself. Wisely foreseeing that such a pursuit as this for his leisure hours was exactly what was wanted to reconcile the lad to a position of isolation from companions of his own rank and age, Mr. Brock prevailed on Mrs. Armadale, with no small difficulty, to let her son have his way. At the period of that second event in the clergyman's life with his pupil which is now

to be related, young Armadale had practised long enough in the builder's yard to have reached the summit of his wishes, by laying with his own hands the keel of his own boat.

Late on a certain summer day, not long after Allan had completed his sixteenth year, Mr. Brock left his pupil hard at work in the yard, and went to spend the evening with Mrs. Armadale, taking *The Times* newspaper with him in his hand.

The years that had passed since they had first met, had long since regulated the lives of the clergyman and his neighbour. The first advances which Mr. Brock's growing admiration for the widow had led him to make, in the early days of their intercourse, had been met, on her side, by an appeal to his forbearance which had closed his lips for the future. She had satisfied him, at once and for ever, that the one place in her heart which he could hope to occupy was the place of a friend. He loved her well enough to take what she would give him: friends they became, and friends they remained from that time forth. No jealous dread of another man's succeeding where he had failed, embittered the clergyman's placid relations with the woman whom he loved. Of the few resident gentlemen in the neighbourhood, none were ever admitted by Mrs. Armadale to more than the merest acquaintance with her. Contentedly self-buried in her country retreat, she was proof against every social attraction that would have tempted other women in her position, and at her age. Mr. Brock and his newspaper, appearing with monotonous regularity at her tea-table three times a week, told her all she knew, or cared to know, of the great outer world which circled round the narrow and changeless limits of her daily life.

On the evening in question, Mr. Brock took the arm-chair in which she always sat, accepted the one cup of tea which he always drank, and opened the newspaper which he always read aloud to Mrs. Armadale, who invariably listened to him reclining on the same sofa, with the same sort of needlework everlasting in her hand.

"Bless my soul!" cried the rector, with his voice in a new octave, and his eyes fixed in astonishment on the first page of the newspaper.

No such introduction to the evening readings as this had ever happened before in all Mrs. Armadale's experience as a listener. She looked up from the sofa, in a flutter of curiosity, and besought her reverend friend to favour her with an explanation.

"I can hardly believe my own eyes," said Mr. Brock. "Here is an advertisement, Mrs. Armadale, addressed to your son."

Without further preface, he read the advertisement, as follows:—

IF this should meet the eye of ALLAN ARMADALE, he is desired to communicate, either personally or by letter, with Messrs. Hammick and Ridge (Lincoln's Inn Fields, London), on business of importance which seriously concerns him. Any one capable of informing Messrs. H. and R. where the person herein advertised can be found, would confer a favour by doing the same. To prevent mistakes, it is further notified that the missing Allan Armadale is a youth aged fifteen years, and that this advertisement is inserted at the instance of his family and friends.

"Another family, and other friends," said Mrs. Armadale. "The person whose name appears in that advertisement is not my son."

The tone in which she spoke surprised Mr. Brock. The change in her face, when he looked up, shocked him. Her delicate complexion had faded away to a dull white; her eyes were averted from her visitor with a strange mixture of confusion and alarm; she looked an older woman than she was, by ten good years at least.

"The name is so very uncommon," said Mr. Brock, imagining he had offended her, and trying to excuse himself. "It really seemed impossible there could be two persons—"

"There *are* two," interposed Mrs. Armadale. "Allan, as you know, is sixteen years old. If you look back at the advertisement, you will find the missing person described as being only fifteen. Although he bears the same surname and the same Christian name, he is, I thank God, in no way whatever related to my son. As long as I live it will be the object of my hopes and prayers, that Allan may never see him, may never even hear of him. My kind friend, I see I surprise you; will you bear with me if I leave these strange circumstances unexplained? There is past misfortune and misery in my early life too painful for me to speak of, even to *you*. Will you help me to bear the remembrance of it, by never referring to this again? Will you do even more—will you promise not to speak of it to Allan, and not to let that newspaper fall in his way?"

Mr. Brock gave the pledge required of him, and considerately left her to herself.

The rector had been too long and too truly attached to Mrs. Armadale to be capable of regarding her with any unworthy distrust. But it would be idle to deny that he felt disappointed by her want of confidence in him, and that he looked inquisitively at the advertisement more than once, on his way back to his own house. It was clear enough, now, that Mrs. Armadale's motive for burying her son as well as herself in the seclusion of a remote country village, was not so much to keep him under her own eye, as to keep him from discovery by his namesake. Why did she dread the idea of their ever meeting? Was it a dread for herself, or a dread for her son? Mr. Brock's loyal belief in his friend rejected any solution of the difficulty which pointed at some past misconduct of Mrs. Armadale's, and which associated it with those painful remembrances to which she had alluded, or with the estrangement from her brothers which had now kept her parted for years from her relatives and her home. That night, he destroyed the advertisement with his own hand; that night he resolved that the subject should never be suffered to enter his mind again. There was another Allan Armadale about the world, a stranger to his pupil's blood, and a vagabond advertised in the public newspapers. So much, accident had revealed to him. More, for Mrs. Armadale's sake, he had no wish to discover—and more, he would never seek to know.

This was the second in the series of events which dated from the

rector's connection with Mrs. Armadale and her son. Mr. Brock's memory, travelling on nearer and nearer to present circumstances, reached the third stage of its journey through the bygone time, and stopped at the year eighteen hundred and fifty, next.

The five years that had passed had made little, if any, change in Allan's character. He had simply developed (to use his tutor's own expression) from a boy of sixteen to a boy of twenty-one. He was just as easy and open in his disposition as ever; just as quaintly and inveterately good-humoured; just as heedless in following his own impulses, lead him where they might. His bias towards the sea had strengthened with his advance to the years of manhood. From building a boat, he had now got on—with two journeymen at work under him—to building a decked vessel of five-and-thirty tons. Mr. Brock had conscientiously tried to divert him to higher aspirations; had taken him to Oxford, to see what college life was like; had taken him to London, to expand his mind by the spectacle of the great metropolis. The change had diverted Allan, but had not altered him in the least. He was as impenetrably superior to all worldly ambition as Diogenes himself. "Which is best," asked this unconscious philosopher, "to find out the way to be happy for yourself, or to let other people try if they can find it out for you?" From that moment, Mr. Brock permitted his pupil's character to grow at its own rate of development, and Allan went on uninterruptedly with the work of his yacht.

Time, which had wrought so little change in the son, had not passed harmless over the mother. Mrs. Armadale's health was breaking fast. As her strength failed, her temper altered for the worse: she grew more and more fretful, more and more subject to morbid fears and fancies, more and more reluctant to leave her own room. Since the appearance of the advertisement, five years since, nothing had happened to force her memory back to the painful associations connected with her early life. No word more on the forbidden topic had passed between the rector and herself; no suspicion had ever been raised in Allan's mind of the existence of his namesake; and yet, without the shadow of a reason for any special anxiety, Mrs. Armadale had become, of late years, obstinately and fretfully uneasy on the subject of her son. At one time, she would congratulate herself on the fancy for yacht-building and sailing which kept him happy and occupied under her own eye. At another, she spoke with horror of his trusting himself habitually to the treacherous ocean on which her husband had met his death. Now in one way, and now in another, she tried her son's forbearance as she had never tried it in her healthier and happier days. More than once, Mr. Brock dreaded a serious disagreement between them; but Allan's natural sweetness of temper, fortified by his love for his mother, carried him triumphantly through all trials. Not a hard word, or a harsh look ever escaped him in her presence; he was unchangeably loving and forbearing with her to the very last.

Such were the positions of the son, the mother, and the friend, when

the next notable event happened in the lives of the three. On a dreary afternoon, early in the month of November, Mr. Brock was disturbed over the composition of his sermon by a visit from the landlord of the village inn.

After making his introductory apologies, the landlord stated the urgent business on which he had come to the rectory, clearly enough. A few hours since, a young man had been brought to the inn by some farm labourers in the neighbourhood, who had found him wandering about one of their master's fields, in a disordered state of mind, which looked to their eyes like downright madness. The landlord had given the poor creature shelter, while he sent for medical help; and the doctor, on seeing him, had pronounced that he was suffering from fever on the brain, and that his removal to the nearest town at which a hospital or a workhouse infirmary could be found to receive him, would in all probability be fatal to his chances of recovery. After hearing this expression of opinion, and after observing for himself that the stranger's only luggage consisted of a small carpet-bag which had been found in the field near him, the landlord had set off on the spot to consult the rector, and to ask, in this serious emergency, what course he was to take next.

Mr. Brock was the magistrate, as well as the clergyman, of the district, and the course to be taken, in the first instance, was to his mind clear enough. He put on his hat, and accompanied the landlord back to the inn.

At the inn-door they were joined by Allan, who had heard the news through another channel, and who was waiting Mr. Brock's arrival, to follow in the magistrate's train, and to see what the stranger was like. The village surgeon joined them at the same moment, and the four went into the inn together.

They found the landlord's son on one side, and the ostler on the other, holding the man down in his chair. Young, slim, and undersized, he was strong enough at that moment to make it a matter of difficulty for the two to master him. His tawny complexion, his large bright brown eyes, his black mustachios and beard, gave him something of a foreign look. His dress was a little worn, but his linen was clean. His dusky hands were wiry and nervous, and were lividly discoloured in more places than one, by the scars of old wounds. The toes of one of his feet, off which he had kicked the shoe, grasped at the chair-rail through his stocking, with the sensitive muscular action which is only seen in those who have been accustomed to go barefoot. In the frenzy that now possessed him, it was impossible to notice, to any useful purpose, more than this. After a whispered consultation with Mr. Brock, the surgeon personally superintended the patient's removal to a quiet bedroom at the back of the house. Shortly afterwards, his clothes and his carpet-bag were sent downstairs, and were searched, on the chance of finding a clue by which to communicate with his friends, in the magistrate's presence.

The carpet-bag contained nothing but a change of clothing, and two

books—the Plays of Sophocles, in the original Greek, and the *Faust* of Goethe, in the original German. Both volumes were much worn by reading; and on the fly-leaf of each were inscribed the initials O. M. So much the bag revealed, and no more.

The clothes which the man wore when he was discovered in the field were tried next. A purse (containing a sovereign and a few shillings), a pipe, a tobacco-pouch, a handkerchief, and a little drinking-cup of horn, were produced in succession. The next object, and the last, was found crumpled up carelessly in the breast-pocket of the coat. It was a written testimonial to character, dated and signed, but without any address. So far as this document could tell it, the stranger's story was a sad one indeed. He had apparently been employed for a short time as usher at a school, and had been turned adrift in the world, at the outset of his illness, from the fear that the fever might be infectious, and that the prosperity of the establishment might suffer accordingly. Not the slightest imputation of any misbehaviour in his employment rested on him. On the contrary, the schoolmaster had great pleasure in testifying to his capacity and his character, and in expressing a fervent hope that he might (under Providence) succeed in recovering his health in somebody else's house.

The written testimonial which afforded this glimpse at the man's story served one purpose more—it connected him with the initials on the books, and identified him to the magistrate and the landlord under the strangely uncouth name of Ozias Midwinter.

Mr. Brock laid aside the testimonial, suspecting that the schoolmaster had purposely abstained from writing his address on it, with the view of escaping all responsibility in the event of his usher's death. In any case it was manifestly useless, under existing circumstances, to think of tracing the poor wretch's friends—if friends he had. To the inn he had been brought, and, as a matter of common humanity, at the inn he must remain for the present. The difficulty about expenses, if it came to the worst, might possibly be met by charitable contributions from the neighbours, or by a collection after a sermon at church. Assuring the landlord that he would consider this part of the question, and would let him know the result, Mr. Brock quitted the inn, without noticing for the moment that he had left Allan there behind him.

Before he had got fifty yards from the house his pupil overtook him. Allan had been most uncharacteristically silent and serious all through the search at the inn—but he had now recovered his usual high spirits. A stranger would have set him down as wanting in common feeling.

"This is a sad business," said the rector. "I really don't know what to do for the best about that unfortunate man."

"You may make your mind quite easy, sir," said young Armadale, in his offhand way. "I settled it all with the landlord a minute ago."

"You!" exclaimed Mr. Brock, in the utmost astonishment.

"I have merely given a few simple directions," pursued Allan. "Our

friend the usher is to have everything he requires, and is to be treated like a prince; and when the doctor and the landlord want their money they are to come to me."

"My dear Allan," Mr. Brock gently remonstrated. "When will you learn to think before you act on those generous impulses of yours? You are spending more money already on your yacht-building than you can afford—"

"Only think! we laid the first planks of the deck, the day before yesterday," said Allan, flying off to the new subject in his usual bird-witted way. "There's just enough of it done to walk on, if you don't feel giddy. I'll help you up the ladder, Mr. Brock, if you'll only come and try."

"Listen to me," persisted the rector; "I'm not talking about the yacht now. That is to say, I am only referring to the yacht as an illustration—"

"And a very pretty illustration too," remarked the incorrigible Allan. "Find me a smarter little vessel of her size in all England, and I'll give up yacht-building to-morrow. Whereabouts were we in our conversation, sir? I'm rather afraid we have lost ourselves somehow."

"I am rather afraid one of us is in the habit of losing himself every time he opens his lips," retorted Mr. Brock. "Come, come, Allan, this is serious. You have been rendering yourself liable for expenses which you may not be able to pay. Mind, I am far from blaming you for your kind feeling towards this poor friendless man—"

"Don't be low-spirited about him, sir. He'll get over it—he'll be all right again in a week or so. A capital fellow, I have not the least doubt!" continued Allan, whose habit it was to believe in everybody, and to despair of nothing. "Suppose you ask him to dinner when he gets well, Mr. Brock? I should like to find out (when we are all three snug and friendly together over our wine, you know) how he came by that extraordinary name of his. Ozias Midwinter! Upon my life, his father ought to be ashamed of himself."

"Will you answer me one question before I go in?" said the rector, stopping in despair at his own gate. "This man's bill for lodging and medical attendance may mount to twenty or thirty pounds before he gets well again, if he ever does get well. How are you to pay it?"

"What's that the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, when he finds himself in a mess with his accounts, and doesn't see his way out again?" asked Allan. "He always tells his honourable friend he's quite willing to leave a something or other—"

"A margin?" suggested Mr. Brock.

"That's it," said Allan. "I'm like the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I'm quite willing to leave a margin. The yacht (bless her heart!) doesn't eat up everything. If I'm short by a pound or two, don't be afraid, sir. There's no pride about me; I'll go round with the hat, and get the balance in the neighbourhood. Deuce take the pounds, shillings, and pence! I

wish they could all three get rid of themselves like the Bedouin brothers at the show. Don't you remember the Bedouin brothers, Mr. Brock? 'Ali will take a lighted torch, and jump down the throat of his brother Muli—Muli will take a lighted torch, and jump down the throat of his brother Hassan—and Hassan, taking a third lighted torch, will conclude the performances by jumping down his own throat, and leaving the spectators in total darkness.' Wonderfully good, that—what I call real wit, with a fine strong flavour about it. Wait a minute! Where are we? We have lost ourselves again. Oh, I remember—money. What I can't beat into my thick head," concluded Allan, quite unconscious that he was preaching socialist doctrines to a clergyman, "is the meaning of the fuss that's made about giving money away. Why can't the people who have got money to spare give it to the people who haven't got money to spare, and make things pleasant and comfortable all the world over in that way? You're always telling me to cultivate ideas, Mr. Brock. There's an idea, and, upon my life, I don't think it's a bad one."

Mr. Brock gave his pupil a good-humoured poke with the end of his stick. "Go back to your yacht," he said. "All the little discretion you have got in that flighty head of yours, is left on board in your tool-chest. How that lad will end," pursued the rector, when he was left by himself, "is more than any human being can say. I almost wish I had never taken the responsibility of him on my shoulders."

Three weeks passed before the stranger with the uncouth name was pronounced to be at last on the way to recovery. During this period, Allan had made regular inquiries at the inn; and, as soon as the sick man was allowed to see visitors, Allan was the first who appeared at his bedside. So far, Mr. Brock's pupil had shown no more than a natural interest in one of the few romantic circumstances which had varied the monotony of the village life: he had committed no imprudence, and he had exposed himself to no blame. But as the days passed, young Armadale's visits to the inn began to lengthen considerably; and the surgeon (a cautious elderly man) gave the rector a private hint to bestir himself. Mr. Brock acted on the hint immediately, and discovered that Allan had followed his usual impulses in his usual headlong way. He had taken a violent fancy to the castaway usher; and had invited Ozias Midwinter to reside permanently in the neighbourhood, in the new and interesting character of his bosom friend.

Before Mr. Brock could make up his mind how to act in this emergency, he received a note from Allan's mother, begging him to use his privilege as an old friend, and to pay her a visit in her room. He found Mrs. Armadale suffering under violent nervous agitation, caused entirely by a recent interview with her son. Allan had been sitting with her all the morning, and had talked of nothing but his new friend. The man with the horrible name (as poor Mrs. Armadale described him) had questioned Allan, in a singularly inquisitive manner, on the subject of himself and his family, but had kept his own personal history entirely in the

dark. At some former period of his life he had been accustomed to the sea and to sailing. Allan had, unfortunately, found this out, and a bond of union between them was formed on the spot. With a merciless distrust of the stranger—simply *because* he was a stranger—which appeared rather unreasonable to Mr. Brock, Mrs. Armadale besought the rector to go to the inn without a moment's loss of time, and never to rest until he had made the man give a proper account of himself. “Find out everything about his father and mother!” she said, in her vehement female way. “Make sure before you leave him that he is not a vagabond roaming the country under an assumed name.”

“My dear lady,” remonstrated the rector, obediently taking his hat, “whatever else we may doubt, I really think we may feel sure about the man's name! It is so remarkably ugly, that it must be genuine. No sane human being would *assume* such a name as Ozias Midwinter.”

“You may be quite right, and I may be quite wrong; but pray go and see him,” persisted Mrs. Armadale. “Go, and don't spare him, Mr. Brock. How do we know that this illness of his may not have been put on for a purpose?”

It was useless to reason with her. The whole College of Physicians might have certified to the man's illness, and, in her present frame of mind, Mrs. Armadale would have disbelieved the College, one and all, from the president downwards. Mr. Brock took the wise way out of the difficulty—he said no more, and he set off for the inn immediately.

Ozias Midwinter, recovering from brain-fever, was a startling object to contemplate, on a first view of him. His shaven head, tied up roughly in an old yellow silk handkerchief; his tawny, haggard cheeks; his bright brown eyes, preternaturally large and wild; his tangled black beard; his long supple, sinewy fingers, wasted by suffering, till they looked like claws—all tended to discompose the rector at the outset of the interview. When the first feeling of surprise had worn off, the impression that followed it was not an agreeable one. Mr. Brock could not conceal from himself that the stranger's manner was against him. The general opinion has settled that if a man is honest, he is bound to assert it by looking straight at his fellow-creatures when he speaks to them. If this man was honest, his eyes showed a singular perversity in looking away and denying it. Possibly they were affected in some degree by a nervous restlessness in his organization, which appeared to pervade every fibre in his lean, lithe body. The rector's healthy Anglo-Saxon flesh crept responsively at every casual movement of the usher's supple brown fingers, and every passing distortion of the usher's haggard yellow face. “God forgive me!” thought Mr. Brock, with his mind running on Allan, and Allan's mother, “I wish I could see my way to turning Ozias Midwinter adrift in the world again!”

The conversation which ensued between the two was a very guarded one. Mr. Brock felt his way gently, and found himself, try where he might, always kept politely, more or less, in the dark. From first to last,

the man's real character shrank back with a savage shyness from the rector's touch. He started by an assertion which it was impossible to look at him and believe—he declared that he was only twenty years of age. All he could be persuaded to say on the subject of the school was, that the bare recollection of it was horrible to him. He had only filled the usher's situation for ten days when the first appearance of his illness caused his dismissal. How he had reached the field in which he had been found, was more than he could say. He remembered travelling a long distance by railway, with a purpose (if he had a purpose) which it was now impossible to recall, and then wandering coastwards, on foot, all through the day, or all through the night—he was not sure which. The sea kept running in his mind, when his mind began to give way. He had been employed on the sea, as a lad. He had left it, and had filled a situation at a bookseller's in a country town. He had left the bookseller's, and had tried the school. Now the school had turned him out, he must try something else. It mattered little what he tried—failure (for which nobody was ever to blame but himself) was sure to be the end of it, sooner or later. Friends to assist him, he had none to apply to; and as for relations, he wished to be excused from speaking of them. For all he knew they might be dead, and for all *they* knew *he* might be dead. That was a melancholy acknowledgment to make at his time of life, there was no denying it. It might tell against him in the opinions of others—and it did tell against him, no doubt, in the opinion of the gentleman who was talking to him at that moment.

These strange answers were given in a tone and manner far removed from bitterness on the one side, or from indifference on the other. Ozias Midwinter at twenty, spoke of his life as Ozias Midwinter at seventy might have spoken, with a long weariness of years on him which he had learnt to bear patiently.

Two circumstances pleaded strongly against the distrust with which, in sheer perplexity of mind, Mr. Brock blindly regarded him. He had written to a savings' bank in a distant part of England, had drawn his money, and had paid the doctor and the landlord. A man of vulgar mind, after acting in this manner, would have treated his obligations lightly, when he had settled his bills. Ozias Midwinter spoke of his obligations—and especially of his obligation to Allan—with a fervour of thankfulness which it was not surprising only, but absolutely painful to witness. He showed a horrible sincerity of astonishment at having been treated with common Christian kindness in a Christian land. He spoke of Allan's having become answerable for all the expenses of sheltering, nursing, and curing him, with a savage rapture of gratitude and surprise, which burst out of him like a flash of lightning. "So help me God!" cried the castaway usher, "I never met with the like of him; I never heard of the like of him before!" In the next instant, the one glimpse of light which the man had let in on his own passionate nature was quenched again in darkness. His wandering eyes, returning to their

old trick, looked uneasily away from Mr. Brock; and his voice dropped back once more into its unnatural steadiness and quietness of tone. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "I have been used to be hunted, and cheated, and starved. Everything else comes strange to me." Half attracted by the man, half repelled by him, Mr. Brock, on rising to take leave, impulsively offered his hand, and then, with a sudden misgiving, confusedly drew it back again. "You meant that kindly, sir," said Ozias Midwinter, with his own hands crossed resolutely behind him. "I don't complain of your thinking better of it. A man who can't give a proper account of himself, is not a man for a gentleman in your position to take by the hand."

Mr. Brock left the inn thoroughly puzzled. Before returning to Mrs. Armadale, he sent for her son. The chances were that the guard had been off the stranger's tongue when he spoke to Allan; and with Allan's frankness, there was no fear of his concealing anything that had passed between them from the rector's knowledge.

Here, again, Mr. Brock's diplomacy achieved no useful results. Once started on the subject of Ozias Midwinter, Allan rattled on about his new friend, in his usual easy light-hearted way. But he had really nothing of importance to tell—for nothing of importance had been revealed to him. They had talked about boat-building and sailing by the hour together; and Allan had got some valuable hints. They had discussed (with diagrams to assist them, and with more valuable hints for Allan) the serious impending question of the launch of the yacht. On other occasions they had diverged to other subjects—to more of them than Allan could remember, on the spur of the moment. Had Midwinter said nothing about his relations in the flow of all this friendly talk? Nothing, except that they had not behaved well to him—hang his relations! Was he at all sensitive on the subject of his own odd name? Not the least in the world; he had set the example, like a sensible fellow, of laughing at it himself: deuce take his name, it did very well when you were used to it. What had Allan seen in him to take such a fancy to? Allan had seen in him,—what he didn't see in people in general. He wasn't like all the other fellows in the neighbourhood. All the other fellows were cut out on the same pattern. Every man of them was equally healthy, muscular, loud, hard-headed, clean-skinned, and rough; every man of them drank the same draughts of beer, smoked the same short pipes all day long, rode the best horse, shot over the best dog, and put the best bottle of wine in England on his table at night; every man of them sponged himself every morning in the same sort of tub of cold water, and bragged about it in frosty weather in the same sort of way; every man of them thought getting into debt a capital joke, and betting on horse-races one of the most meritorious actions that a human being can perform. They were no doubt excellent fellows in their way; but the worst of them was, they were all exactly alike. It was a perfect god-send to meet with a man like Midwinter—a man who was not cut out on

the regular local pattern, and whose way in the world had the one great merit (in those parts) of being a way of his own.

Leaving all remonstrances for a fitter opportunity, the rector went back to Mrs. Armadale. He could not disguise from himself that Allan's mother was the person really answerable for Allan's present indiscretion. If the lad had seen a little less of the small gentry in the neighbourhood, and a little more of the great outside world at home and abroad, the pleasure of cultivating Ozias Midwinter's society might have had fewer attractions for him.

Conscious of the unsatisfactory result of his visit to the inn, Mr. Brock felt some anxiety about the reception of his report, when he found himself once more in Mrs. Armadale's presence. His forebodings were soon realized. Try as he might to make the best of it, Mrs. Armadale seized on the one suspicious fact of the usher's silence about himself, as justifying the strongest measures that could be taken to separate him from her son. If the rector refused to interfere, she declared her intention of writing to Ozias Midwinter with her own hand. Remonstrance irritated her to such a pitch, that she astounded Mr. Brock by reverting to the forbidden subject of five years since, and referring him to the conversation which had passed between them when the advertisement had been discovered in the newspaper. She passionately declared that the vagabond Armadale of that advertisement, and the vagabond Midwinter at the village inn, might, for all she knew to the contrary, be one and the same. The rector vainly reiterated his conviction that the name was the very last in the world that any man (and a young man especially) would be likely to assume. Nothing quieted Mrs. Armadale but absolute submission to her will. Dreading the consequences if he still resisted her in her feeble state of health, and foreboding a serious disagreement between the mother and son, if the mother interfered, Mr. Brock undertook to see Midwinter again, and to tell him plainly that he must give a proper account of himself, or that his intimacy with Allan must cease. The two concessions which he exacted from Mrs. Armadale in return, were, that she should wait patiently until the doctor reported the man fit to travel, and that she should be careful in the interval not to mention the matter in any way to her son.

In a week's time, Midwinter was able to drive out (with Allan for his coachman), in the pony-chaise belonging to the inn; and in ten days, the doctor privately reported him as fit to travel. Towards the close of that tenth day, Mr. Brock met Allan and his new friend enjoying the last gleams of wintry sunshine in one of the inland lanes. He waited until the two had separated, and then followed the usher on his way back to the inn.

The rector's resolution to speak pitilessly to the purpose was in some danger of failing him, as he drew nearer and nearer to the friendless man, and saw how feebly he still walked, how loosely his worn coat hung about him, and how heavily he leaned on his cheap clumsy stick. Humanely

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reluctant to say the decisive words too precipitately, Mr. Brock tried him first with a little compliment on the range of his reading, as shown by the volume of Sophocles and the volume of Goethe which had been found in his bag ; and asked how long he had been acquainted with German and Greek. The quick ear of Midwinter detected something wrong in the tone of Mr. Brock's voice. He turned in the darkening twilight and looked suddenly and suspiciously in the rector's face.

" You have something to say to me," he answered; " and it is not what you are saying now."

There was no help for it, but to accept the challenge. Very delicately, with many preparatory words, to which the other listened in unbroken silence, Mr. Brock came little by little nearer and nearer to the point. Long before he had really reached it—long before a man of no more than ordinary sensibility would have felt what was coming—Ozias Midwinter stood still in the lane, and told the rector that he need say no more.

" I understand you, sir," said the usher. " Mr. Armadale has an ascertained position in the world; Mr. Armadale has nothing to conceal, and nothing to be ashamed of. I agree with you that I am not a fit companion for him. The best return I can make for his kindness, is to presume on it no longer. You may depend on my leaving this place to-morrow morning."

He spoke no word more; he would hear no word more. With a self-control which, at his years and with his temperament, was nothing less than marvellous, he civilly took off his hat, bowed, and returned to the inn by himself.

Mr. Brock slept badly that night. The issue of the interview in the lane had made the problem of Ozias Midwinter a harder problem to solve than ever.

Early the next morning a letter was brought to the rector from the inn, and the messenger announced that the strange gentleman had taken his departure. The letter enclosed an open note addressed to Allan, and requested Allan's tutor (after first reading it himself), to forward it or not at his own sole discretion. The note was a startlingly short one: it began and ended in a dozen words :— " Don't blame Mr. Brock ; Mr. Brock is right. Thank you, and good-by.—O. M."

The rector forwarded the note to its proper destination, as a matter of course ; and sent a few lines to Mrs. Armadale at the same time, to quiet her anxiety by the news of the usher's departure. This done, he waited the visit from his pupil, which would probably follow the delivery of the note, in no very tranquil frame of mind. There might or might not be some deep motive at the bottom of Midwinter's conduct; but, thus far, it was impossible to deny that he had behaved in such a manner as to rebuke the rector's distrust, and to justify Allan's good opinion of him.

The morning wore on, and young Armadale never appeared. After looking for him vainly in the yard where the yacht was building, Mr. Brock went to Mrs. Armadale's house, and there heard news from

the servant which turned his steps in the direction of the inn. The landlord at once acknowledged the truth—young Mr. Armadale had come there with an open letter in his hand, and had insisted on being informed of the road which his friend had taken. For the first time in the landlord's experience of him, the young gentleman was out of temper; and the girl who waited on the customers had stupidly mentioned a circumstance which had added fuel to the fire. She had acknowledged having heard Mr. Midwinter lock himself into his room overnight, and burst into a violent fit of crying. That trifling particular had set Mr. Armadale's face all of a flame; he had shouted and sworn; he had rushed into the stables; had forced the ostler to saddle him a horse, and had set off at full gallop on the road that Ozias Midwinter had taken before him.

After cautioning the landlord to keep Allan's conduct a secret, if any of Mrs. Armadale's servants came that morning to the inn, Mr. Brock went home again, and waited anxiously to see what the day would bring forth.

To his infinite relief, his pupil appeared at the rectory late in the afternoon. Allan looked, and spoke, with a dogged determination which was quite new in his old friend's experience of him. Without waiting to be questioned, he told his story in his usual straightforward way. He had overtaken Midwinter on the road; and—after trying vainly, first to induce him to return, then to find out where he was going to—had threatened to keep company with him for the rest of the day, and had so extorted the confession that he was going to try his luck in London. Having gained this point, Allan had asked next for his friend's address in London—had been entreated by the other not to press his request—had pressed it, nevertheless, with all his might, and had got the address at last, by making an appeal to Midwinter's gratitude, for which (feeling heartily ashamed of himself) he had afterwards asked Midwinter's pardon. "I like the poor fellow, and I won't give him up," concluded Allan, bringing his clenched fist down with a thump on the rectory table. "Don't be afraid of my vexing my mother; I'll leave you to speak to her, Mr. Brock, at your own time and in your own way; and I'll just say this much more by way of bringing the thing to an end. Here is the address safe in my pocket-book, and here am I, standing firm, for once, on a resolution of my own. I'll give you and my mother time to re-consider this; and, when the time is up, if my friend Midwinter doesn't come to *me*, I'll go to my friend Midwinter!"

So the matter rested for the present; and such was the result of turning the castaway usher adrift in the world again.

A month passed, and brought in the new year—'51. Overleaping that short lapse of time, Mr. Brock paused, with a heavy heart, at the next event; to his mind the one mournful, the one memorable event of the series—Mrs. Armadale's death.

The first warning of the affliction that was near at hand, had followed

close on the usher's departure in December, and had arisen out of a circumstance which dwelt painfully on the rector's memory from that time forth.

But three days after Midwinter had left for London, Mr. Brock was accosted in the village by a neatly-dressed woman, wearing a gown and bonnet of black silk and a red Paisley shawl, who was a total stranger to him, and who inquired the way to Mrs. Armadale's house. She put the question without raising the thick black veil that hung over her face. Mr. Brock, in giving her the necessary directions, observed that she was a remarkably elegant and graceful woman, and looked after her as she bowed and left him, wondering who Mrs. Armadale's visitor could possibly be.

A quarter of an hour later, the lady, still veiled as before, passed Mr. Brock again close to the inn. She entered the house, and spoke to the landlady. Seeing the landlord shortly afterwards hurrying round to the stables, Mr. Brock asked him if the lady was going away. Yes; she had come from the railway in the omnibus, but she was going back again more creditably in a carriage of her own hiring, supplied by the inn.

The rector proceeded on his walk, rather surprised to find his thoughts running inquisitively on a woman who was a stranger to him. When he got home again, he found the village surgeon waiting his return, with an urgent message from Allan's mother. About an hour since, the surgeon had been sent for in great haste to see Mrs. Armadale. He had found her suffering from an alarming nervous attack, brought on (as the servants suspected) by an unexpected, and, possibly, an unwelcome visitor, who had called that morning. The surgeon had done all that was needful, and had no apprehension of any dangerous results. Finding his patient eagerly desirous, on recovering herself, to see Mr. Brock immediately, he had thought it important to humour her, and had readily undertaken to call at the rectory with a message to that effect.

Looking at Mrs. Armadale with a far deeper interest in her than the surgeon's interest, Mr. Brock saw enough in her face, when it turned towards him on his entering the room, to justify instant and serious alarm. She allowed him no opportunity of soothing her; she heeded none of his inquiries. Answers to certain questions of her own were what she wanted, and what she was determined to have:—Had Mr. Brock seen the woman who had presumed to visit her that morning? Yes. Had Allan seen her? No: Allan had been at work since breakfast, and was at work still, in his yard by the waterside. This latter reply appeared to quiet Mrs. Armadale for the moment: she put her next question—the most extraordinary question of the three—more composedly. Did the rector think Allan would object to leaving his vessel for the present, and to accompanying his mother on a journey to look out for a new house in some other part of England? In the greatest amazement, Mr. Brock asked what reason there could possibly be for leaving her present residence?

Mrs. Armadale's reason, when she gave it, only added to his surprise. The woman's first visit might be followed by a second; and rather than see her again, rather than run the risk of Allan's seeing her and speaking to her, Mrs. Armadale would leave England if necessary, and end her days in a foreign land. Taking counsel of his experience as a magistrate, Mr. Brock inquired if the woman had come to ask for money. Yes: respectably as she was dressed, she had described herself as being "in distress;" had asked for money, and had got it—but the money was of no importance; the one thing needful was to get away before the woman came again. More and more surprised, Mr. Brock ventured on another question. Was it long since Mrs. Armadale and her visitor had last met? Yes; as long as all Allan's lifetime—as long as one-and-twenty years.

At that reply, the rector shifted his ground, and took counsel next of his experience as a friend.

"Is this person," he asked, "connected in any way with the painful remembrances of your early life?"

"Yes, with the painful remembrance of the time when I was married," said Mrs. Armadale. "She was associated, as a mere child, with a circumstance which I must think of with shame and sorrow to my dying day."

Mr. Brock noticed the altered tone in which his old friend spoke, and the unwillingness with which she gave her answer.

"Can you tell me more about her, without referring to yourself?" he went on. "I am sure I can protect you, if you will only help me a little. Her name, for instance—you can tell me her name?"

Mrs. Armadale shook her head. "The name I knew her by," she said, "would be of no use to you. She has been married since then—she told me so herself."

"And without telling you her married name?"

"She refused to tell it."

"Do you know anything of her friends?"

"Only of her friends, when she was a child. They called themselves her uncle and aunt. They were low people, and they deserted her at the school on my father's estate. We never heard any more of them."

"Did she remain under your father's care?"

"She remained under my care—that is to say, she travelled with us. We were leaving England, just at that time, for Madeira. I had my father's leave to take her with me, and to train the wretch to be my maid——"

At those words Mrs. Armadale stopped confusedly. Mr. Brock tried gently to lead her on. It was useless; she started up in violent agitation, and walked excitedly backwards and forwards in the room.

"Don't ask me any more!" she cried out, in loud, angry tones. "I parted with her when she was a girl of twelve years old. I never saw her again, I never heard of her again, from that time to this. I don't know how she has discovered me, after all the years that have passed—I only know that she *has* discovered me. She will find her way to Allan next,

she will poison my son's mind against me. Help me to get away from her! help me to take Allan away before she comes back!"

The rector asked no more questions; it would have been cruel to press her farther. The first necessity was to compose her by promising compliance with all that she desired. The second was to induce her to see another medical man. Mr. Brock contrived to reach his end harmlessly in this latter case, by reminding her that she wanted strength to travel, and that her own medical attendant might restore her all the more speedily to herself, if he were assisted by the best professional advice. Having overcome her habitual reluctance to seeing strangers by this means, the rector at once went to Allan; and, delicately concealing what Mrs. Armadale had said at the interview, broke the news to him that his mother was seriously ill. Allan would hear of no messengers being sent for assistance: he drove off on the spot to the railway, and telegraphed himself to Bristol for medical help.

On the next morning the help came, and Mr. Brock's worst fears were confirmed. The village surgeon had fatally misunderstood the case from the first, and the time was past now at which his errors of treatment might have been set right. The shock of the previous morning had completed the mischief. Mrs. Armadale's days were numbered.

The son who dearly loved her, the old friend to whom her life was precious, hoped vainly to the last. In a month from the physician's visit all hope was over; and Allan shed the first bitter tears of his life at his mother's grave.

She had died more peacefully than Mr. Brock had dared to hope; leaving all her little fortune to her son, and committing him solemnly to the care of her one friend on earth. The rector had entreated her to let him write and try to reconcile her brothers with her before it was too late. She had only answered sadly, that it was too late already. But one reference escaped her in her last illness to those early sorrows which had weighed heavily on all her after-life, and which had passed thrice already, like shadows of evil, between the rector and herself. Even on her death-bed she had shrunk from letting the light fall clearly on the story of the past. She had looked at Allan kneeling by the bedside, and had whispered to Mr. Brock:—"Never let his Namesake come near him! Never let that Woman find him out!" No word more fell from her that touched on the misfortunes which had tried her in the past, or on the dangers which she dreaded in the future. The secret which she had kept from her son and from her friend, was a secret which she carried with her to the grave.

When the last offices of affection and respect had been performed, Mr. Brock felt it his duty, as executor to the deceased lady, to write to her brothers, and to give them information of her death. Believing that he had to deal with two men who would probably misinterpret his motives, if he left Allan's position unexplained, he was careful to remind them that Mrs. Armadale's son was well provided for; and that the object of his

letter was simply to communicate the news of their sister's decease. The two letters were despatched towards the middle of January, and by return of post the answers were received. The first which the rector opened, was written, not by the elder brother, but by the elder brother's only son. The young man had succeeded to the estates in Norfolk on his father's death, some little time since. He wrote in a frank and friendly spirit, assuring Mr. Brock that, however strongly his father might have been prejudiced against Mrs. Armadale, the hostile feeling had never extended to her son. For himself, he had only to add that he would be sincerely happy to welcome his cousin to Thorpe-Ambrose, whenever his cousin came that way.

The second letter was a far less agreeable reply to receive than the first. The younger brother was still alive, and still resolute neither to forget nor forgive. He informed Mr. Brock that his deceased sister's choice of a husband, and her conduct to her father at the time of her marriage, had made any relations of affection or esteem impossible, on his side, from that time forth. Holding the opinions he did, it would be equally painful to his nephew and himself if any personal intercourse took place between them. He had adverted, as generally as possible, to the nature of the differences which had kept him apart from his late sister, in order to satisfy Mr. Brock's mind that a personal acquaintance with young Mr. Armadale was, as a matter of delicacy, quite out of the question, and having done this, he would beg leave to close the correspondence.

Mr. Brock wisely destroyed the second letter on the spot, and, after showing Allan his cousin's invitation, suggested that he should go to Thorpe-Ambrose as soon as he felt fit to present himself to strangers. Allan listened to the advice patiently enough; but he declined to profit by it. "I will shake hands with my cousin willingly if I ever meet him," he said, "but I will visit no family, and be a guest in no house, in which my mother has been badly treated." Mr. Brock remonstrated gently, and tried to put matters in their proper light. Even at that time—even while he was still ignorant of events which were then impending—Allan's strangely isolated position in the world was a subject of serious anxiety to his old friend and tutor. The proposed visit to Thorpe-Ambrose opened the very prospect of his making friends and connections suited to him in rank and age which Mr. Brock most desired to see—but Allan was not to be persuaded; he was obstinate and unreasonable; and the rector had no alternative but to drop the subject.

One on another, the weeks passed monotonously; and Allan showed but little of the elasticity of his age and character, in bearing the affliction that had made him motherless. He finished and launched his yacht; but his own journeymen remarked that the work seemed to have lost its interest for him. It was not natural to the young man to brood over his solitude and his grief, as he was brooding now. As the spring advanced, Mr. Brock began to feel uneasy about the future, if Allan was not roused at once by change of scene. After much pondering, the rector decided

on trying a trip to Paris, and on extending the journey southwards if his companion showed an interest in continental travelling. Allan's reception of the proposal made atonement for his obstinacy in refusing to cultivate his cousin's acquaintance—he was willing to go with Mr. Brock wherever Mr. Brock pleased. The rector took him at his word, and, in the middle of March, the two strangely assorted companions left for London on their way to Paris.

Arrived in London, Mr. Brock found himself unexpectedly face to face with a new anxiety. The unwelcome subject of Ozias Midwinter, which had been buried in peace since the beginning of December, rose to the surface again, and confronted the rector at the very outset of his travels, more unmanageably than ever.

Mr. Brock's position, in dealing with this difficult matter, had been hard enough to maintain when he had first meddled with it. He now found himself with no vantage-ground left to stand on. Events had so ordered it, that the difference of opinion between Allan and his mother on the subject of the usher, was entirely disassociated with the agitation which had hastened Mrs. Armadale's death. Allan's resolution to say no irritating words, and Mr. Brock's reluctance to touch on a disagreeable topic, had kept them both silent about Midwinter in Mrs. Armadale's presence, during the three days which had intervened between that person's departure and the appearance of the strange woman in the village. In the period of suspense and suffering that had followed, no recurrence to the subject of the usher had been possible, and none had taken place. Free from all mental disquietude on this score, Allan had stoutly preserved his perverse interest in his new friend. He had written to tell Midwinter of his affliction—and he now proposed (unless the rector formally objected to it) paying a visit to his friend, before he started for Paris the next morning. What was Mr. Brock to do? There was no denying that Midwinter's conduct had pleaded unanswered against poor Mrs. Armadale's unfounded distrust of him. If the rector, with no convincing reason to allege against it, and with no right to interfere but the right which Allan's courtesy gave him, declined to sanction the proposed visit—then farewell to all the old sociability and confidence between tutor and pupil on the contemplated tour. Environed by difficulties, which might have been possibly worsted by a less just and a less kind-hearted man, Mr. Brock said a cautious word or two at parting; and (with more confidence in Midwinter's discretion and self-denial than he quite liked to acknowledge, even to himself), left Allan free to take his own way.

After wiling away an hour, during the interval of his pupil's absence, by a walk in the streets, the rector returned to his hotel; and, finding the newspaper disengaged in the coffee-room, sat down absently to look over it. His eye, resting idly on the title-page, was startled into instant attention by the very first advertisement that it chanced to light on at the head of the column. There was Allan's mysterious namesake again, figuring in

capital letters—and associated, this time (in the character of a dead man) with the offer of a pecuniary reward ! Thus it ran:—

SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.—To parish clerks, sextons, and others. Twenty Pounds Reward will be paid to any person who can produce evidence of the death of **ALLAN ARMADALE**, only son of the late Allan Armadale, of Barbadoes, and born in that island in the year 1830. Further particulars, on application to Messrs. Hammick and Ridge, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London.

Even Mr. Brock's essentially unimaginative mind began to stagger superstitiously in the dark, as he laid the newspaper down again. Little by little, a vague suspicion took possession of him, that the whole series of events which had followed the first appearance of Allan's namesake in the newspaper six years since, were held together by some mysterious connection, and were tending steadily to some unimaginable end. Without knowing why, he began to feel uneasy at Allan's absence. Without knowing why, he became impatient to get his pupil away from England before anything else happened between night and morning.

In an hour more the rector was relieved of all immediate anxiety, by Allan's return to the hotel. The young man was vexed and out of spirits. He had discovered Midwinter's lodgings, but he had failed to find Midwinter himself. The only account his landlady could give of him was, that he had gone out at his customary time to get his dinner at the nearest eating-house, and that he had not returned, in accordance with his usual regular habits, at his usual regular hour. Allan had therefore gone to inquire at the eating-house, and had found, on describing him, that Midwinter was well known there. It was his custom, on other days, to take a frugal dinner, and to sit half an hour afterwards reading the newspaper. On this occasion, after dining, he had taken up the paper as usual, had suddenly thrown it aside again, and had gone, nobody knew where, in a violent hurry. No further information being attainable, Allan had left a note at the lodgings, giving his address at the hotel, and begging Midwinter to come and say good-by before his departure for Paris.

The evening passed, and Allan's invisible friend never appeared. The morning came, bringing no obstacles with it, and Mr. Brock and his pupil left London. So far, fortune had declared herself at last on the rector's side. Ozias Midwinter, after intrusively rising to the surface, had conveniently dropped out of sight again. What was to happen next ?

Advancing once more, by three weeks only, from past to present, Mr. Brock's memory took up the next event on the seventh of April. To all appearance, the chain was now broken at last. The new event had no recognisable connection (either to his mind or to Allan's) with any of the persons who had appeared, or any of the circumstances that had happened, in the bygone time.

The travellers had, as yet, got no farther than Paris. Allan's spirits had risen with the change ; and he had been made all the readier to enjoy the novelty of the scene around him, by receiving a letter from Midwinter, containing news which Mr. Brock himself acknowledged pro-

mised fairly for the future. The ex-usher had been away on business when Allan had called at his lodgings, having been led by an accidental circumstance to open communications with his relatives on that day. The result had taken him entirely by surprise—it had unexpectedly secured to him a little income of his own for the rest of his life. His future plans, now that this piece of good fortune had fallen to his share, were still unsettled. But if Allan wished to hear what he ultimately decided on, his agent in London (whose direction he enclosed) would receive communications for him, and would furnish Mr. Armadale at all future times with his address.

On receipt of this letter, Allan had seized the pen in his usual head-long way, and had insisted on Midwinter's immediately joining Mr. Brock and himself on their travels. The last days of March passed, and no answer to the proposal was received. The first days of April came, and on the seventh of the month there was a letter for Allan at last on the breakfast-table. He snatched it up, looked at the address, and threw the letter down again impatiently. The handwriting was not Midwinter's. Allan finished his breakfast before he cared to read what his correspondent had to say to him.

The meal over, young Armadale lazily opened the letter. He began it with an expression of supreme indifference. He finished it with a sudden leap out of his chair, and a loud shout of astonishment. Wondering, as he well might, at this extraordinary outbreak, Mr. Brock took up the letter, which Allan had tossed across the table to him. Before he had come to the end of it, his hands dropped helplessly on his knees, and the blank bewilderment of his pupil's expression was accurately reflected on his own face.

If ever two men had good cause for being thrown completely off their balance, Allan and the rector were those two. The letter which had struck them both with the same shock of astonishment did, beyond all question, contain an announcement which, on a first discovery of it, was simply incredible. The news was from Norfolk, and was to this effect. In little more than one week's time, death had mown down no less than three lives in the family at Thorpe-Ambrose—and Allan Armadale was at that moment heir to an estate of eight thousand a year!

A second perusal of the letter enabled the rector and his companion to master the details which had escaped them on a first reading. The writer was the family lawyer at Thorpe-Ambrose. After announcing to Allan the deaths of his cousin Arthur, at the age of twenty-five; of his uncle Henry, at the age of forty-eight; and of his cousin John, at the age of twenty-one, the lawyer proceeded to give a brief abstract of the terms of the elder Mr. Blanchard's will. The claims of male issue were, as is not unusual in such cases, preferred to the claims of female issue. Failing Arthur, and his issue male, the estate was left to Henry and his issue male. Failing them, it went to the issue male of Henry's sister; and, in default of such issue, to the next heir male. As events

had happened, the two young men, Arthur and John, had died unmarried, and Henry Blanchard had died, leaving no surviving child but a daughter. Under these circumstances, Allan was the next heir male pointed at by the will, and was now legally successor to the Thorpe-Ambrose estate. Having made this extraordinary announcement, the lawyer requested to be favoured with Mr. Armadale's instructions, and added, in conclusion, that he would be happy to furnish any further particulars that were desired.

It was useless to waste time in wondering at an event which neither Allan nor his mother had ever thought of as even remotely possible. The only thing to be done was to go back to England at once. The next day found the travellers installed once more in their London hotel, and the day after, the affair was placed in the proper professional hands. The inevitable corresponding and consulting ensued; and one by one the all-important particulars flowed in, until the measure of information was pronounced to be full.

This was the strange story of the three deaths:—

At the time when Mr. Brock had written to Mrs. Armadale's relatives to announce the news of her decease (that is to say, in the middle of the month of January), the family at Thorpe-Ambrose numbered five persons—Arthur Blanchard (in possession of the estate), living in the great house with his mother; and Henry Blanchard, the uncle, living in the neighbourhood, a widower with two children, a son and a daughter. To cement the family connection still more closely, Arthur Blanchard was engaged to be married to his cousin. The wedding was to be celebrated with great local rejoicings, in the coming summer, when the young lady had completed her twentieth year.

The month of February had brought changes with it in the family position. Observing signs of delicacy in the health of his son, Mr. Henry Blanchard left Norfolk, taking the young man with him, under medical advice, to try the climate of Italy. Early in the ensuing month of March, Arthur Blanchard also left Thorpe-Ambrose, for a few days only, on business which required his presence in London. The business took him into the City. Annoyed by the endless impediments in the streets, he returned westward by one of the river steamers; and, so returning, met his death.

As the steamer left the wharf, he noticed a woman near him who had shown a singular hesitation in embarking, and who had been the last of the passengers to take her place in the vessel. She was neatly dressed in black silk, with a red Paisley shawl over her shoulders, and she kept her face hidden behind a thick veil. Arthur Blanchard was struck by the rare grace and elegance of her figure, and he felt a young man's passing curiosity to see her face. She neither lifted her veil, nor turned her head his way. After taking a few steps hesitatingly backwards and forwards on the deck, she walked away on a sudden to the stern of the vessel. In a minute more, there was a cry of alarm from the man at the

helm, and the engines were stopped immediately. The woman had thrown herself overboard.

The passengers all rushed to the side of the vessel to look. Arthur Blanchard alone, without an instant's hesitation, jumped into the river. He was an excellent swimmer, and he reached the woman as she rose again to the surface, after sinking for the first time. Help was at hand; and they were both brought safely ashore. The woman was taken to the nearest police-station, and was soon restored to her senses; her preserver giving his name and address, as usual in such cases, to the inspector on duty, who wisely recommended him to get into a warm bath, and to send to his lodgings for dry clothes. Arthur Blanchard, who had never known an hour's illness since he was a child, laughed at the caution, and went back in a cab. The next day, he was too ill to attend the examination before the magistrate. A fortnight afterwards, he was a dead man.

The news of the calamity reached Henry Blanchard and his son at Milan; and within an hour of the time when they received it, they were on their way back to England. The snow on the Alps had loosened earlier than usual that year, and the passes were notoriously dangerous. The father and son, travelling in their own carriage, were met on the mountain by the mail returning, after sending the letters on by hand. Warnings which would have produced their effect, under any ordinary circumstances, were now vainly addressed to the two Englishmen. Their impatience to be at home again, after the catastrophe which had befallen their family, brooked no delay. Bribes, lavishly offered to the postillions, tempted them to go on. The carriage pursued its way, and was lost to view in the mist. When it was seen again, it was disinterred from the bottom of a precipice—the men, the horses, and the vehicle all crushed together under the wreck and ruin of an avalanche.

So the three lives were mown down by death. So, in a clear sequence of events, a woman's suicide-leap into a river had opened to Allan Armadale the succession to the Thorpe-Ambrose estates.

Who was the woman? The man who saved her life never knew. The magistrate who remanded her, the chaplain who exhorted her, the reporter who exhibited her in print—never knew. It was recorded of her with surprise, that, though most respectably dressed, she had nevertheless described herself as being "in distress." She had expressed the deepest contrition, but had persisted in giving a name which was on the face of it a false one; in telling a commonplace story, which was manifestly an invention; and in refusing to the last to furnish any clue to her friends. A lady connected with a charitable institution ("interested by her extreme elegance and beauty") had volunteered to take charge of her, and to bring her into a better frame of mind. The first day's experience of the penitent had been far from cheering, and the second day's experience had been conclusive. She had left the institution by stealth; and—though the visiting clergyman, taking a special interest in the case, had caused special efforts to be made—all search after her, from that time forth, had proved fruitless.

While this useless investigation (undertaken at Allan's express desire) was in progress, the lawyers had settled the preliminary formalities connected with the succession to the property. All that remained was for the new master of Thorpe-Ambrose to decide when he would personally establish himself on the estate of which he was now the legal possessor.

Left necessarily to his own guidance in this matter, Allan settled it for himself in his usual hot-headed generous way. He positively declined to take possession, until Mrs. Blanchard and her niece (who had been permitted, thus far, as a matter of courtesy, to remain in their old home) had recovered from the calamity that had befallen them, and were fit to decide for themselves what their future proceedings should be. A private correspondence followed this resolution, comprehending, on Allan's side, unlimited offers of everything he had to give (in a house which he had not yet seen); and, on the ladies' side, a discreetly reluctant readiness to profit by the young gentleman's generosity in the matter of time. To the astonishment of his legal advisers, Allan entered their office one morning, accompanied by Mr. Brock ; and announced, with perfect composure, that the ladies had been good enough to take his own arrangements off his hands, and that, in deference to their convenience, he meant to defer establishing himself at Thorpe-Ambrose till that day two months. The lawyers stared at Allan—and Allan, returning the compliment, stared at the lawyers.

"What on earth are you wondering at, gentlemen?" he inquired, with a boyish bewilderment in his good-humoured blue eyes. "Why shouldn't I give the ladies their two months, if the ladies want them? Let the poor things take their own time, and welcome. My rights? and my position? Oh, pooh! pooh! I'm in no hurry to be squire of the parish—it's not in my way. What do I mean to do for the two months? What I should have done anyhow, whether the ladies had stayed or not; I mean to go cruising at sea. That's what *I* like! I've got a new yacht at home in Somersetshire—a yacht of my own building. And I'll tell you what, sir," continued Allan, seizing the head partner by the arm, in the fervour of his friendly intentions, "you look sadly in want of a holiday in the fresh air, and you shall come along with me, on the trial-trip of my new vessel. And your partners, too, if they like. And the head-clerk, who is the best fellow I ever met with in my life. Plenty of room—we'll all shake down together on the floor, and we'll give Mr. Brock a rug on the cabin-table. Thorpe-Ambrose be hanged! Do you mean to say if you had built a vessel yourself (as I have), you would go to any estate in the three kingdoms, while your own little beauty was sitting like a duck on the water at home, and waiting for you to try her? You legal gentlemen are great hands at argument. What do you think of *that* argument? I think it's unanswerable—and I'm off to Somersetshire to-morrow."

With those words, the new possessor of eight thousand a year dashed into the head-clerk's office, and invited that functionary to a cruise on the

high seas, with a smack on the shoulder which was heard distinctly by his masters in the next room. The Firm looked in interrogative wonder at Mr. Brock. A client who could see a position among the landed gentry of England waiting for him, without being in a hurry to occupy it at the earliest possible opportunity, was a client of whom they possessed no previous experience.

"He must have been very oddly brought up," said the lawyers to the rector.

"Very oddly," said the rector to the lawyers.

A last leap over one month more, brought Mr. Brock to the present time—to the bedroom at Castletown, in which he was sitting thinking, and to the anxiety which was obstinately intruding itself between him and his night's rest. That anxiety was no unfamiliar enemy to the rector's peace of mind. It had first found him out in Somersetshire six months since, and it had now followed him to the Isle of Man under the inveterately-obtrusive form of Ozias Midwinter.

The change in Allan's future prospects had worked no corresponding alteration in his perverse fancy for the castaway at the village inn. In the midst of the consultations with the lawyers he had found time to visit Midwinter; and on the journey back with the rector, there was Allan's friend in the carriage, returning with them to Somersetshire by Allan's own invitation. The ex-usher's hair had grown again on his shaven skull, and his dress showed the renovating influence of an accession of pecuniary means; but in all other respects the man was unchanged. He met Mr. Brock's distrust, with the old uncomplaining resignation to it; he maintained the same suspicious silence on the subject of his relatives and his early life; he spoke of Allan's kindness to him with the same undisciplined fervour of gratitude and surprise. "I have done what I could, sir," he said to Mr. Brock, while Allan was asleep in the railway carriage. "I have kept out of Mr. Armadale's way, and I have not even answered his last letter to me. More than that, is more than I can do. I don't ask you to consider my own feeling towards the only human creature who has never suspected and never ill-treated me. I can resist my own feeling, but I can't resist the young gentleman himself. There's not another like him in the world. If we are to be parted again, it must be his doing or yours—not mine. The dog's master has whistled," said this strange man, with a momentary outburst of the hidden passion in him, and a sudden springing of angry tears in his wild brown eyes: "and it's hard, sir, to blame the dog, when the dog comes."

Once more, Mr. Brock's humanity got the better of Mr. Brock's caution. He determined to wait, and see what the coming days of social intercourse might bring forth.

The days passed; the yacht was rigged, and fitted for sea; a cruise was arranged to the Welsh coast—and Midwinter the Secret was the same Midwinter still. Confinement on board a little vessel of five-and-thirty

tons, offered no great attraction to a man of Mr. Brock's time of life. But he sailed on the trial trip of the yacht nevertheless, rather than trust Allan alone with his new friend.

Would the close companionship of the three on their cruise, tempt the man into talking of his own affairs? No; he was ready enough on other subjects, especially if Allan led the way to them. But not a word escaped him about himself. Mr. Brock tried him with questions about his recent inheritance, and was answered as he had been answered once already at the Somersetshire inn. It was a curious coincidence, Midwinter admitted, that Mr. Armadale's prospects and his own prospects, should both have unexpectedly changed for the better about the same time. But there the resemblance ended. It was no large fortune that had fallen into his lap, though it was enough for his wants. It had not reconciled him with his relations, for the money had not come to him as a matter of kindness but as a matter of right. As for the circumstance which had led to his communicating with his family, it was not worth mentioning—seeing that the temporary renewal of intercourse which had followed, had produced no friendly results. Nothing had come of it but the money—and, with the money, an anxiety which troubled him sometimes, when he woke in the small hours of the morning.

At those last words he became suddenly silent, as if, for once, his well-guarded tongue had betrayed him. Mr. Brock seized the opportunity, and bluntly asked him what the nature of the anxiety might be. Did it relate to money? No—it related to a Letter which had been waiting for him for many years. Had he received the letter? Not yet; it had been left under charge of one of the partners in the firm which had managed the business of his inheritance for him; the partner had been absent from England; and the letter, locked up among his own private papers, could not be got at till he returned. He was expected back towards the latter part of that present May, and if Midwinter could be sure where the cruise would take them to at the close of the month, he thought he would write and have the letter forwarded. Had he any family reasons to be anxious about it? None that he knew of; he was curious to see what had been waiting for him for many years, and that was all. So he answered the rector's questions, with his tawny face turned away over the low bulwark of the yacht, and his fishing-line dragging in his supple brown hands.

favoured by wind and weather, the little vessel had done wonders on her trial-trip. Before the period fixed for the duration of the cruise had half expired, the yacht was as high up on the Welsh coast as Holyhead; and Allan, eager for adventure in unknown regions, had declared boldly for an extension of the voyage northwards to the Isle of Man. Having ascertained from reliable authority, that the weather really promised well for a cruise in that quarter, and that, in the event of any unforeseen necessity for return, the railway was accessible by the steamer from Douglas to Liverpool, Mr. Brock agreed to his pupil's proposal. By that night's post he wrote to Allan's lawyers and to his own rectory,

indicating Douglas in the Isle of Man as the next address to which letters might be forwarded. At the post-office, he met Midwinter, who had just dropped a letter into the box. Remembering what he had said on board the yacht, Mr. Brock concluded that they had both taken the same precaution, and had ordered their correspondence to be forwarded to the same place.

Late the next day, they set sail for the Isle of Man. For a few hours all went well; but sunset brought with it the signs of a coming change. With the darkness, the wind rose to a gale; and the question whether Allan and his journeymen had, or had not, built a stout sea-boat was seriously tested for the first time. All that night, after trying vainly to bear up for Holyhead, the little vessel kept the sea, and stood her trial bravely. The next morning, the Isle of Man was in view, and the yacht was safe at Castletown. A survey by daylight of hull and rigging showed that all the damage done might be set right again in a week's time. The cruising party had accordingly remained at Castletown; Allan being occupied in superintending the repairs, Mr. Brock in exploring the neighbourhood, and Midwinter in making daily pilgrimages on foot, to Douglas and back, to inquire for letters.

The first of the cruising party who received a letter was Allan. "More worries from those everlasting lawyers," was all he said, when he had read the letter, and had crumpled it up in his pocket. The rector's turn came next, before the week's sojourn at Castletown had expired. On the fifth day, he found a letter from Somersetshire waiting for him at the hotel. It had been brought there by Midwinter, and it contained news which entirely overthrew all Mr. Brock's holiday plans. The clergyman who had undertaken to do duty for him in his absence had been unexpectedly summoned home again; and Mr. Brock had no choice (the day of the week being Friday) but to cross the next morning from Douglas to Liverpool, and get back by railway on Saturday night, in time for Sunday's service.

Having read his letter, and resigned himself to his altered circumstances as patiently as he might, the rector passed next to a question that pressed for serious consideration in its turn. Burdened with his heavy responsibility towards Allan, and conscious of his own undiminished distrust of Allan's new friend, how was he to act in the emergency that now beset him, towards the two young men who had been his companions on the cruise?

Mr. Brock had first asked himself that awkward question on the Friday afternoon; and he was still trying, vainly, to answer it, alone in his own room, at one o'clock on the Saturday morning. It was then only the end of May, and the residence of the ladies at Thorpe-Ambrose (unless they chose to shorten it of their own accord) would not expire till the middle of June. Even if the repairs of the yacht had been completed (which was not the case), there was no possible pretence for hurrying Allan back to Somersetshire. But one other alternative remained—to leave him where he was. In other words, to leave him, at the turning-

point of his life, under the sole influence of a man whom he had first met with as a castaway at a village inn, and who was still, to all practical purposes, a total stranger to him.

In despair of obtaining any better means of enlightenment to guide his decision, Mr. Brock reverted to the impression which Midwinter had produced on his own mind in the familiarity of the cruise.

Young as he was, the ex-usher had evidently lived a wild and varied life. He had seen and observed more than most men of twice his age; his talk showed a strange mixture of sense and absurdity—of vehement earnestness at one time, and fantastic humour at another. He could speak of books like a man who had really enjoyed them; he could take his turn at the helm like a sailor who knew his duty; he could sing, and tell stories, and cook, and climb the rigging, and lay the cloth for dinner, with an odd satirical delight in the exhibition of his own dexterity. The display of these, and other qualities like them, as his spirits rose with the cruise, had revealed the secret of his attraction for Allan plainly enough. But had all disclosures rested there? Had the man let no chance light in on his character in the rector's presence? Very little; and that little did not set him forth in a morally alluring aspect. His way in the world had lain evidently in doubtful places; familiarity with the small villanies of vagabonds peeped out of him now and then; words occasionally slipped off his tongue with an unpleasantly strong flavour about them; and, more significant still, he habitually slept the light suspicious sleep of a man who has been accustomed to close his eyes in doubt of the company under the same roof with him. Down to the very latest moment of the rector's experience of him—down to that present Friday night—his conduct had been persistently secret and unaccountable to the very last. After bringing Mr. Brock's letter to the hotel, he had mysteriously disappeared from the house without leaving any message for his companions, and without letting anybody see whether he had, or had not, received a letter himself. At nightfall, he had come back stealthily in the darkness—had been caught on the stairs by Allan, eager to tell him of the change in the rector's plans—had listened to the news without a word of remark—and had ended by sulkily locking himself into his own room. What was there in his favour to set against such revelations of his character as these—against his wandering eyes, his obstinate reserve with the rector, his ominous silence on the subject of family and friends? Little or nothing: the sum of all his merits began and ended with his gratitude to Allan.

Mr. Brock left his seat on the side of the bed, trimmed his candle, and, still lost in his own thoughts, looked out absently at the night. The change of place brought no new ideas with it. His retrospect over his own past life had amply satisfied him that his present sense of responsibility rested on no merely fanciful grounds; and having brought him to that point, had left him there, standing at the window, and seeing nothing

but the total darkness in his own mind faithfully reflected by the total darkness of the night.

"If I only had a friend to apply to!" thought the rector. "If I could only find some one to help me in this miserable place!"

At the moment when the aspiration crossed his mind, it was suddenly answered by a low knock at the door; and a voice said softly in the passage outside, "Let me come in."

After an instant's pause to steady his nerves, Mr. Brock opened the door, and found himself, at one o'clock in the morning, standing face to face on the threshold of his own bedroom with Ozias Midwinter.

"Are you ill?" asked the rector, as soon as his astonishment would allow him to speak.

"I have come here to make a clean breast of it!" was the strange answer. "Will you let me in?"

With those words he walked into the room—his eyes on the ground, his lips ashy pale, and his hand holding something hidden behind him.

"I saw the light under your door," he went on, without looking up, and without moving his hand; "and I know the trouble on your mind which is keeping you from your rest. You are going away to-morrow morning, and you don't like leaving Mr. Armadale alone with a stranger like me."

Startled as he was, Mr. Brock saw the serious necessity of being plain with a man, who had come at that time, and had said those words to him.

"You have guessed right," he answered. "I stand in the place of a father to Allan Armadale, and I am naturally unwilling to leave him, at his age, with a man whom I don't know."

Ozias Midwinter took a step forward to the table. His wandering eyes rested on the rector's New Testament, which was one of the objects lying on it.

"You have read that Book, in the years of a long life, to many congregations," he said. "Has it taught you mercy to your miserable fellow-creatures?"

Without waiting to be answered, he looked Mr. Brock in the face for the first time, and brought his hidden hand slowly into view.

"Read that," he said; "and, for Christ's sake, pity me when you know who I am."

He laid a letter of many pages on the table. It was the letter that Mr. Neal had posted at Wildbad nineteen years since.

The Bars of France and England.

FOR a good many years—indeed, ever since the National Guards of the newborn republic came over to visit us in London in 1848—France and England have been taking every sort of opportunity of shaking hands with each other. Considering the amount of quarrelling and fighting in nearly every department of affairs which had gone on between the two nations for about five centuries, and considering also the unspeakable importance to each of not falling back into that unfortunate state of things, this is a subject of the greatest congratulation ; and few things can be more important than to maintain and promote so good a practice. Few, if any, of the particular acts of courtesy exchanged between the two countries have been so significant, or so entirely successful, as the reception given by the English bar to M. Berryer. The scene itself was one which no one who saw it will readily forget. In the first place, the Middle Temple Hall is very nearly the best place that could have been used for such a purpose ; and, in the next place, the speaking was as good as it is possible for after-dinner eloquence to be. The Chief Justice of England, Lord Brougham and Mr. Gladstone acquitted themselves in a way which showed that M. Berryer's surprising gifts as a speaker were not unrivalled in this country ; and the speech of the former naturally suggested a comparison between two of the finest voices in Europe. Of course, however, the great and striking event of the evening was the speech of M. Berryer himself. What he said was obvious and simple enough ; but it was delivered with wonderful grace and power. The perfect simplicity of his language, the extraordinary strength and decisiveness of his voice, and the ease and nature of his gestures, gave to all who saw and heard him the rare pleasure of feeling that they had heard and seen a great orator, and a great orator of that great school which has exercised such deep and long influence over the fortunes and over the tastes of France.

Of course the few sentences spoken by M. Berryer in the Middle Temple Hall gave only a very trifling specimen of his powers ; but they were like a few pencil-strokes by a great artist—full of character and power. We do not wish to intrude upon the reporter's province, or to reprint what has been already published in all the newspapers ; but the main thoughts of his address may stand as the text of a few observations on a curious subject—the relative position and characters of the French and English bars. M. Berryer said, amongst other things, that the welcome he had received was like the approval of posterity ; he added, with that subdued fervour which forms such a marked feature in all the utterances of that part of French society which protests on whatever grounds against the existing state of things, that he was delighted to see that the Attorney-General

considered himself as the head of the bar, because it reminded him of the time when the *Procureurs-Généraux* and *Avocats-Généraux* of his own country had similar feelings. He said the things which a courteous Frenchman naturally would say about the bar of England; and he was complimented in very eloquent language, both by Lord Brougham and by the Chief Justice, on the way in which he had for so many years discharged the great duties of an advocate, on his eager zeal for the interests of clients of every party, and on the honour which had always regulated that zeal. Lastly, Mr. Gladstone, whose speech was fully equal in interest and power to any other delivered on the occasion, made some general remarks on the importance of the bar to good government, which he illustrated by referring to his own experience in Naples. He said that when every other organ of freedom was silenced, the bar even of Naples maintained its tone, and treated the acts of the Government as they deserved to be treated when they attempted to make the courts of justice the instruments of their manifold oppressions.

All this suggests several observations on the position which a profession equally important and unpopular occupies in France and England.

Englishmen in general know perhaps less than they ought to know of the French bar. They get an occasional glimpse of the speeches of its advocates through the newspapers, and are perhaps apt to suppose that it is distinguished from the English profession principally by the style in which the business is done. This is by no means the case. The French bar occupies in a variety of respects altogether a different position from the bar of England. In the first place, the bar in this country is almost entirely concentrated in London. Though there are a certain number of barristers who practise in a few of the large towns—Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds—all the best part of the business even of those towns is done either in London, or by barristers who come down for the purpose from London to the assizes, and even to the quarter sessions. In France, this is altogether different. There are local bars, some of them of the highest reputation, all over the country, each with its own organization and its own system of discipline. This, like many other points connected with the French bar, is a relic of old times; for the bar is perhaps (with the exception of the Institute) the most eminent and the most traditional body in France. Generally speaking, it is the characteristic of French institutions to be centralized, as it is the characteristic of English institutions to be localized; but the administration of justice forms a striking exception. The fifteen judges who sit at Westminster administer justice, as every one knows, at every assize town in England. In France, there are between twenty and thirty Imperial courts, which, in many respects, may be taken to be the successors of the old *parlements*. Each of these is supreme over a certain number of departments, and has its own officers of justice, of every degree, subject only to the Supreme Court of Appeal (*Cour de Cassation*), which can review the judgments of every court in the whole French Empire. One consequence of this is, that the French bar is far more

scattered than the bar of England, and that it would probably be impossible to collect in any one place—Paris, for instance—such an array of barristers as crowded the Middle Temple Hall to do honour to M. Berryer.

On the other hand, the great multiplication of courts of a considerable degree of dignity and importance must open to the French barrister a much easier road to professional distinction than that along which his English brother has to toil. It would surprise any one who is not well acquainted with the English profession to learn what a very small number of barristers suffice to carry on the business of a court, though the simple reflection that in the nature of things one case only can be heard at one time by one court, and that four barristers are as a rule sufficient for each case, may tend to explain the fact that the same names keep continually recurring in nearly every newspaper report of the proceedings of a given court. The institution of circuits of course carries this still further. When justice is administered in six or seven large towns successively, it happens not unfrequently that the same man is engaged in every important case that occurs in six or seven populous counties. In France, on the other hand, where twenty or thirty Imperial courts are all sitting at once, the demand for advocates must be much greater, though it certainly does not follow that there is business enough to keep them all employed.

It seems highly probable that this is at least one reason of the immense length of French trials. A civil cause in France can hardly be compared to an English case at Nisi Prius, inasmuch as the proceedings are not before a jury; but a French criminal trial, if it is of any sort of importance, will last for weeks together, and is sometimes adjourned, or even broken off, and resumed in consequence of the discovery of fresh evidence, or the adoption of some new line of defence by the prisoner. “*Drame judiciaire*” is the regular conventional expression for such exhibitions. Of late years we have had monster trials in England, but they have been short in comparison with the monster trials of France. There are many reasons for this, but no doubt the French multiplicity of courts, or the English paucity of them, has much to do with it. People must have something to do, and when a local court with very little business, and a considerable array of judges and advocates, gets hold of anything that can be considered as a *cause célèbre*, it is not surprising that they should make the most of it.

The subdivision of the French bar is closely connected with another circumstance which exercises a very deep influence on the character of the whole body. This is its relation to the French bench. In England, the height of a barrister's ambition is to become Attorney or Solicitor General, and so to be transformed into a Lord Chancellor or Chief Justice. If this is not attainable, he is still extremely fortunate if he can become a judge in the superior courts of common law or equity, as the case may be. Failing that, he is, in many cases, only too happy to be made a Commissioner of Bankruptcy, a County Court judge, or a police magistrate; but when any one of those posts is gained, his career is substantially over, and his promotion is at an end. In one or two instances, a puisne judge

has been elevated to the position of a Chief Justice, or even to that of Lord Chancellor. The judge of a County Court, or a police magistrate, may be transferred from a less to a more commodious district; but no one ever heard of the transformation of a County Court judge into a judge of the superior courts. These positions are the great prizes of the profession, and are so well paid in money and dignity as to command the services of the ablest of its members. The consequences of this are of immense practical importance. An English judge is the faithful representative of all the traditions, all the feelings, all the mental habits of the bar. There neither is nor can be any considerable opposition of feeling between them. Here and there, of course, there may be personal dislikes and jealousies. A judge may think a barrister rude, or unfair, or over-zealous. A barrister may think a judge prejudiced, or unmannerly, or stupid; but between the two classes as such there neither is nor can be any contest. Such a notion as that the judges represent authority, and the bar liberty, would never enter into the mind of either. Each, in their own province, and for certain well-known and perfectly definite purposes, represents and enforces the law of the land.

In France this is altogether different. The number of judges is, according to our notions of things, enormous. As a general rule, as many as three seem to be present on all occasions. In civil cases, where there is no jury, there is an obvious reason for such an arrangement; but in criminal cases tried before the *Cours d'Assises* (in which, on important occasions, there will perhaps be five or six judges present), it is by no means easy for an English bystander to understand what conceivable use there is in them. They appear to take hardly any part in what passes, and to leave everything substantially in the hands of the president. There are, moreover, as has been already observed, an immense number of tribunals of all degrees of importance; and as there are many, or at least several, judges in each tribunal, the total number is very considerable indeed. The judges thus form a class by themselves, and are promoted from the less to the more important positions, according to their merits and opportunities. Thus, a distinguished judge in the provinces may hope to be promoted to Paris, but the most distinguished Parisian advocate never thinks of being a judge. He remains an advocate to the end of his days.

This, of course, puts a wide distinction between the advocate and the judge; but there is another circumstance which has a still stronger tendency in that direction. There is a regular "hierarchy," to use the French phrase, of official advocates, who occupy a position altogether distinct from that of the body of the profession. Every Imperial court has its *procureurs impériales*, its *procureurs-généraux*, and its *avocats-généraux*, who are not only public prosecutors in criminal cases, but have also a variety of functions in the administration of civil justice. Thus the French *avocat* has two careers before him,—he may take the official, or he may take the professional line; but these two careers are distinct, and are even, in some respects, opposed to each other. In England, the counsel who prose-

cutes a criminal on Monday, defends others for just the same sort of offences on Tuesday. There are, no doubt, a few cases in which the Government have standing counsel. Thus there are counsel for the Treasury, the Mint, the Admiralty, and some other public offices, to say nothing of the Attorney and Solicitor General; but there is no palpable and obvious distinction between the official advocates and their unofficial colleagues. They wear the same dress, sit in the same seats, receive briefs from their public clients just as other barristers would from private clients, and are candidates for the common run of business—as is the case with other members of the profession. It is very different in France. The official bar, the "*ministère publique*," as it is called, forms a class by itself quite distinct from the general body of advocates. In all criminal, and in some civil cases, the *procureur* or *avocat général*, or his substitute, acts a part something like that of an English judge-advocate. He sits on the bench with the judges, he wears a semi-judicial costume, he has a variety of powers arising from his official position, and he is paid by the Government which appoints him. It is not in human nature that all this should not put a broad distinction between the official and the private advocate, and lead to a state of feeling between the bar and the bench, and between the official and unofficial bar, quite unlike that which exists in England. When an English barrister addresses English judges he always feels that he is addressing men whom he thoroughly understands, and who, in their turn, thoroughly understand him. He is generally conscious that he is addressing those who are not merely his superiors in rank and standing, but also in legal knowledge and experience.

Again, when an English barrister appears against the Crown, either for the sake of defending a prisoner, or in arguing upon a civil question which affects the Government directly or indirectly, his feelings are precisely the same as in any other case. He and his antagonist are on perfectly equal terms. The one has no more a permanent interest in the Crown than the other has in the public. Their parts will probably be reversed to-morrow, and in the meantime they are each no more than ordinary barristers, bound by exactly the same rules, and discharging duties precisely similar in every essential respect. So, as to the judge, it never enters an English barrister's head for a moment that the judge takes the smallest official interest in the result, or has any sort of bias either for or against the success of authority. With a French advocate the case is altogether different. There need not be any reason why he should be particularly respectful to the judges, except on the strength of their official position. There is no particular reason to suppose that they will be his superiors either in ability, experience, or character. They are not his natural chiefs, nor are they men in whom he is certain to find a strong sympathy with his principles of conduct and habits of thought. On the contrary, the judges would be more than human if, after a lifetime passed in the service of the Government which has appointed, paid, and promoted them, they did not feel deeply interested

in its success and passionately alive to all its interests. Still more true is this of an official bar. A man of a warm temper and ready combative disposition—which is the temperament of the majority of advocates—is very liable to be affected with an excess of zeal, even if his client is his client only for a single occasion. When his client is his only client, paying him by a salary and having it in his power to promote him, and when that client is the Government, he must be a very rare kind of man indeed if he is not zealous even to slaying; and if these inducements act upon a highly nervous sensitive temperament like that which is so common in France, the result is almost certain to be a want of fellow-feeling and cordiality between the official advocate and his non-official antagonist.

In these points it would seem that the English bar has the advantage of the profession in France; and the points themselves are unquestionably of vast importance in the administration of justice. This great function of civil life is unquestionably in a much more wholesome state on our own side of the Straits than on the other; and it is equally certain that the satisfactory state of the relations between the bench and the bar is one of the great causes of it. It must not, however, be supposed that the French bar does not derive, from these very circumstances, some qualities for which it is pre-eminently distinguished, and which, for many centuries, have formed its glory. It must be admitted that, though the English courts of law are perfectly just, and though there are immense advantages in the general good feeling which prevails amongst the different branches of the profession, the whole profession, taken together—the judges, the barristers, and all the other persons connected with the administration of justice—do form a united and most powerful body, with interests, feelings, and an *esprit de corps* of their own very different from that of the nation at large, and not at all times, or under all circumstances, in harmony either with its wishes or its interests. The instinct of an English lawyer, of whatever rank—a perfectly genuine and honest one, no doubt, but still a most powerful one—is always in favour of authority. It used to be intensely hard, and it is still, in many cases, by no means easy to make an English lawyer see faults in the principles of the system which he administers. His views even, when they rise to the highest level that they ever do in practice attain, are always legal. They want, to a certain extent, the popular fibre, and they want something even more permanent and general than that—they want a consciousness of the fact that law is deserving of reverence only if, and in so far as it is founded on true, just and beneficial principles, and that the truth and justice of those principles are altogether independent of their recognition by the legislator. In other words, an English lawyer is placed in a most artificial position. He forms part of a powerful and most useful body; but his thoughts and ways are not those of the people for whose sake he exists, and his instincts and sympathies are liable to be considered as somewhat cold and narrow. He is himself indirectly a legislator, and his sympathies are with the legislature and the Government. He likes what is strong and great, and when he acts the part

of a protector and friend to the helpless, he is seldom without a sense of the fact that to do so is a feat of strength and an application of authority.

The unofficial French bar has much less sympathy with authority. It exhibits itself, with far greater ease and propriety, as the protector of the weak and unfortunate. It appeals more naturally than would be possible in England to general principles of justice. Of course, there is a weak side to all this. The generalities of a French advocate are often very poor, and, when carefully examined, turn out to be sophisms; whereas it very rarely happens that an English lawyer of any kind of pretension to distinction has not what he emphatically calls "a case." He is hardly ever reduced to appeal in terms to sympathies and general principles against the law. *Angli sumus, nihil Anglicum à nobis alienum putamus.* No doubt the English are quite right, as they always are, and indeed must be, on every occasion; but still there is room for some admiration of our neighbours. If feeling and a regard for general principles are weaknesses, they are not altogether ungenerous or contemptible weaknesses. Some time ago a man was tried in England for shooting his wife, who had committed adultery under circumstances which no doubt were enough to drive the most patient of men to a perfect frenzy of rage. The popular sympathy in his favour was overwhelming; yet his counsel would not even suggest to the jury that the act, if proved, was anything less than murder, or that they had any sort of right to pay the faintest attention to the aggravation received. It was felt that, in a legal point of view, it was mere proof of motive and malice. Some years ago, in France, a servant, by his mistress's order, shot dead a man who came about the house with the intention of seducing a young lady who belonged to the family. The employers and the servant were tried for the murder. They were defended by M. Berryer, and were all acquitted, apparently because the jury approved of what had been done. In this particular instance we think the English bar has the best of the comparison; but many people would prefer the French to the English advocate; the man who will show himself at times to be the organ of natural feeling, even in a somewhat exaggerated shape, to the man who yields to the law of the land a heartfelt *bonâ fide* allegiance, even when it acts harshly in the particular case, and even when the life of his own client has to be sacrificed to its harshness. If there is more sturdiness in the one character, it would be usually, and perhaps justly considered, that there is more sweetness in the other. The strong point of an English advocate is when the law happens (as in the case of the high-treason trials in 1794) to be on the popular side. A French advocate is apt to be quite as brilliant when he virtually appeals to justice and morality against the law.

If we look not at the mere every-day practice of the court, but at the broad historical facts relating to the two professions, we shall see this contrast between them exhibited on the widest scale. The English bar has been on the whole, and with exceptions, triumphant. The French bar has been militant and often persecuted. English lawyers can say with just

pride, and also with perfect truth, "Our profession has guarded the laws and liberties of England, and has in every great instance made good its point." The rights of the Church of England against the Pope were maintained by legal precedents. The payment of ship-money was resisted, and ultimately defeated by the same means. By the same means the right to personal liberty, the right of the subject to petition, the right of the jury to decide on the question of libel or no libel, the right of the public to agitate peaceably for political reform, were all established, and their rights are the very foundation, nay, they are the substance of what we mean by political liberty. This is a great thing to be able to say, and it is certain that if it should ever be wanted, the old spirit of the profession would show itself to be changed only in so far as it has become deeper and more general than it was. The French bar has not been so successful. The old *parlements* were, with many faults, the noblest institutions in France, perhaps the noblest of their kind in Europe. In genius, in learning, in eloquence, in spirit, and in courage, the *Palais de Justice* was fully the equal—in some forms of those great qualities it was far the superior—of Westminster Hall; but the parliament is gone and the courts at Westminster are now six hundred years old, and bid fair to last as long as the nation itself. The parliament of Paris was the great supporter of another noble institution—the Gallican liberties of the Church in France. We English are too apt in these days to forget that there ever were such things, and to identify the creed of a great part of Europe with that ultramontane Popery which is at present the dominant form of it. There cannot be a more stupid error. The Roman and the Catholic elements in Roman Catholicism are not only distinct, but antagonistic, and the Gallican party in the old Church of France was a root from which a noble tree might have sprung. The Gallican liberties now are with the parliament which protected them; and from day to day the gulf between the religious belief and the masculine thought of France grows wider and wider. The parliament of Paris was for many generations the great bridle on the royal power. They constantly refused to register oppressive edicts, and for so doing were constantly subjected to arbitrary punishments, to banishment and to ruin. Yet, they held their ground with dauntless pertinacity for several centuries; and, not long before the Revolution, gave the crowning proof of their devotion to law and justice, in the teeth of irresistible power. Whether or not the same can be said of the later French judges, is a question which need not be discussed here; but it can, and ought to be said, in the most emphatic manner, of the later French bar. Men like M. Berryer and M. Jules Favre are the worthy successors and representatives of the old magistracy of France—the *noblesse de la robe*—and, like many of their predecessors, they have a right to this title in something more than a mere technical sense. They have opposed all that is bad in the French Government as bravely and unsparingly, with such weapons as they possess, as their ancestors opposed them with more powerful weapons. They have been and still are the representatives of

all that is lofty, and free, and generous. If their efforts in this direction have been less successful than in the parallel case in our own country, the fault is not theirs; and, as their direct reward in the shape of success has been less, their indirect reward in respect of honour and sympathy ought to be greater. England has, and France has not, a free Parliament, a free press, and free political action. Our privileges in this respect are due, in no small degree, to the profession of the law. The defects of the French constitution are, in a great measure, the memorials of the defeat of the French bar and of the old French judges, in gallant and desperate efforts to obtain for their own country the kind of liberty which they liked; and the continued existence of those defects is the subject of constant protests by all that is best and noblest in that great profession. If M. Berryer, M. Favre, and a few other advocates of the same way of thinking, would only throw off their robes and take, like sensible men, to stock-jobbing, or place-hunting, they might command their own price. The enemies of French liberty would feel far more secure against its possible resurrection. To understand how it came to pass that the efforts which were so successful in England failed in France, it would be necessary to go through a course of history on the subject.* It will be enough to say here, that there is sometimes as much honour in defeat as in victory, and that if victory gives an opportunity for the display of the more active qualities, defeat enables men to show purer and less interested devotion to a great cause. The bar and the lawyers of England have, with much assistance, won a great victory, and it would be equally unjust and ungrateful to deny that they have contributed considerably to the various good uses in the shape of good government and general reform to which that victory has been put. The battle in France has gone against freedom; but those who fought for it with all their might, and still enter the most earnest protests that words can frame against violations of it, are entitled to far more sympathy, and certainly not less respect, than those who not only appreciate, but wisely and kindly use the rights purchased for them by the struggles of their predecessors. The English bar feels towards the bar of France much as the troops who took the Malakoff felt towards the troops who were driven out of the Redan. In each case the conquerors had a right to be proud; but in neither case was the defeat shameful. It was not the fault of the regiments who were put upon an impossible task, that they were not properly supported. It is not the fault of the French bar that France does not enjoy many of the blessings with which we are so familiar here.

Of course, there is a good deal of deduction to be made from this. A man would talk wildly who said that the old French parliaments were always, and without reserve, the guardians of liberty. It would be as absurd to say so of them as of our own Parliament or law-courts. They were often the instruments of tyranny, and there are very dark stains on their memory. For instance, the parliaments might have mitigated the

* To explain this was the great object of Sir James Stephen's Lectures on French History, delivered at Cambridge, in 1850-1.

hideous barbarities of the ancient criminal procedure. The use of the torture and of the wheel was in their discretion, and they used them unflinchingly and continually. It is true, no doubt, that the English judges and advocates, who did so many magnanimous things in behalf of liberty, saw no sort of objection to the most contemptible absurdities in the administration of civil justice, or to the most hideous cruelties in the administration of criminal justice. If the French courts tortured criminals with fiendish violence and ingenuity for real crimes, the English courts put men to death for trifles with as much indifference as if they were drowning blind puppies in a stable-yard.

We may, however, be thankful to believe that, in both countries, the age of barbarity of this kind has passed away; and we can afford, in looking back, to remember the pleasanter features of the two professions—the successful sturdiness of the one, and the no less gallant and more devoted and disinterested resistance of the other.

There is another broad point of view, besides the historical and political one, from which the two professions might be compared, but it can only be glanced at here. There is a curious contrast between their intellectual characters. Each, as might have been naturally expected, represents, in the highest degree, the practical intellect of the country to which it belongs. Every one knows what sort of thing the English bar is. It is exactly like a great public school, the boys of which have grown older, and have exchanged boyish for manly objects. There is just the same rough familiarity, the same general ardour of character, the same kind of unwritten code of morals and manners, the same kind of public opinion, expressed in exactly the same blunt unmistakeable manner. People accustomed only to more quiet and conventional forms of behaviour, would be altogether bewildered at hearing the sort of things which the British barrister will say to his learned brother, especially on circuit, if he thinks the occasion requires it. The general intellectual calibre of the profession is just what might be expected from manners of this stamp. There are to be found in Westminster Hall as much industry, as much hardheadedness, as much exact thought, as powerful memories, and as much superficial knowledge of the world—that sort of knowledge which comes not from reflection, but from observation—as could be found in any body of men in the world of the same number. The bar are a robust, hardheaded, and rather hard-handed set of men, with an imperious, audacious, combative turn of mind, which is sometimes, though not very often, capable of bursting out in the form of eloquence. Their learning is of the same sort. It is multifarious, ill-digested, and ill-arranged; but collected with wonderful patience and labour, with a close exactness and severity of logic which is unequalled anywhere else, and with a most sagacious adaptation to the practical business of life.

We do not profess to be able to form an opinion of the French bar in a social point of view, but looking at what they have written, at the manner in which they do their business, and at the regulations of the

profession, it is impossible not to see how strong is the contrast between them and their English brethren. They are far more carefully and specially educated for their profession than English lawyers. A man must have satisfied tests of learning both literary and legal of no small stringency before he can be put on the French law-list. When he is there he is subjected to a real discipline far more serious than anything that exists in England. His professional rules, or what is perhaps rather affectedly called his "*religion d'avocat*," are far stricter than those of an Englishman. For instance, an English barrister's maxim is that all is fish that comes to his net in the shape of briefs. A French *avocat* is, to some extent—a real and appreciable extent—responsible for the character of his cause. He is by no means so highly paid in money as an English barrister. There are, probably, as many men at the English bar who make 8,000*l.* or 9,000*l.* a year as there are at the French bar who make half the money. One reason of this is, that much of the business which comes before English courts of law is otherwise settled in France—by the administration, or by tribunals and chambers of commerce. A French barrister, again, is brought into personal intercourse with his client. You may go to your *avocat* in the first instance without having recourse to an attorney. This gives him more of a personal interest in his causes, and leads him probably to take a less technical view of the subject than an Englishman. An Englishman, again, has to make his own way and get his business as he can, and as he is forbidden to ask for it directly or indirectly, he often has to pass long years of brieflessness. A French *avocat*, if he is industrious and able, has always opportunities of showing what he has in him. He is pretty sure to be *nommé d'office* to defend prisoners, and he can distinguish himself in gratuitous causes according to special arrangements made for that purpose. All these things tend to give the French bar a less violent, less eager, less pushing character than that of the English profession. They both can and do look more to the graceful side of the business, and are inclined to make more of their position as advocates, and less of the profits, pecuniary and official, of advocacy than the English.

The great French law-books are a striking instance of this. There are in France, as in England, technical books which are simply tools of trade; and, as far as a slight experience goes, we should say they were by no means so good as the parallel books in England. They are less like books and more like indexes; but there is a class of French law-books the like of which can hardly be said to exist in England, and which it would be highly desirable for English lawyers not only to read, but, in some respects, to imitate. Here we arrive at a point at which we must take leave of the subject. It would be hard on our readers to ask them to read a dissertation on the merits and failings of Domat, Pothier, Emerigon, and others of more modern date, but they have merits which hardly any English writer on law has ever understood; and it is high time both to understand and to acclimatize them.

Giovanni Battista Niccolini.

GIOVANNI BATTISTA NICCOLINI was born on the 31st of October, 1782, and died on the 20th of September, 1861. The seventy-nine years which intervened between that vintage-time when he first saw the light at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pistoja, and that when his infirm life flickered out at Florence, and he was borne amid regrets and honours to his rest in Santa Croce, were filled with the most stirring and momentous events of Italy's modern history.

During a great portion of those years the name of Niccolini, the great dramatic poet, the dauntless defender of political freedom, the special terror and abhorrence of the Church of Rome, was constantly before the eyes of his country, as that of the most illustrious of her representative men of letters, who had done his work, and no light work either, from dawn to dark, literally without fear or reproach.

Niccolini's family was noble, and his father, the Cavaliere Ippolito, held a small government employment at San Giuliano. Of him nothing notable is recorded. He was a quiet country gentleman, whose days were passed between his office duties, his vines, and his olives. The poet's mother—for here the mother once again preponderates in the making of a great man—was a woman of genius; one who held it by inheritance too, for her name was Settimia da Filicaja, and she was a descendant from the Tuscan poet, who, amid the moral and political degradation of the seventeenth century in Italy, had the courage to love his fallen country, and strive, however vainly, to shame her sons from their fatal sloth, as his famous sonnet, "To Italy," long ago testified to the ears and hearts of all Europe.

Few, if any, pencillings of the events of Niccolini's early years are to be found in the meagre biographical notices which as yet exist of the poet. They are diffuse about the reigning literary tastes of the time, and the authors at that period most in vogue, who were just then in the heat of their fierce "battle of the books," and were pitilessly shelling each other from the forts of Classicism and Romanticism. No doubt the contest was one of vital importance in the annals of literature, yet one had rather that the writer of a memoir of Niccolini should have recorded how the future author of *John of Procida* learned and played in his pleasant country home; whether he was like Giusti, a dull boy at reading and spelling, but vastly clever at story-weaving in the dark; or if the mind which was one day so grandly to embody the martyrdom of Arnold of Brescia, was curbed and harassed in its early days by narrow priestly teaching; by impositions from the Penitential Psalms, and readings from

the Lives of the Saints. However his infancy was spent, he got his schooling at the convent of the Padri Scolopii, at Florence, and went thence to the University of Pisa. There he gave himself up chiefly to classical studies, and formed a close intimacy with the erudite and polished Tuscan scholar, Angiolo Maria Delci, the author of many elegant satires and epigrams in the purest classical taste. Delci was several years older than Niccolini, who looked up to him in those college days as his model of literary excellence. The friendship lasted unimpaired for many years, till the death of Delci, who may be remembered, perhaps, even beyond the Alps, as the munificent donor of a splendid collection of rare and ancient editions of the classics to the public library of his native Florence.

Despite Delci's severe classicism, no wiser nor healthier training than his on social and political questions could have strengthened the future dramatist for his arduous career. Delci loved liberty as dearly as he did the classics. He dreamed grand, but at that time hopeless, dreams of the regeneration of Italy, and, as Niccolini long years afterwards wrote of him, branded the education made up of miserable driblets of adulterated knowledge which her rulers were wont grudgingly to dole out to their hungering subjects, as "that feeble and malignant glimmer which, though it but lead the reason astray, is held so dear by the innumerable herd of fools, who bring into honour and repute the wretched shreds of learning allowed us, like toys to children, that we may be kept in perpetual babyhood."

Niccolini subsequently formed a close intimacy with another celebrity of his time, persecuted and an exile for freedom's sake. Ugo Foscolo, who was then living as a refugee in Florence, became his constant companion, and a strong attachment sprang up between them. Ugo Foscolo dedicated to his friend his *Chioma di Berenice*, translated from the Greek of Callimachus; and it has been asserted that in his *Letters of Jacopo Ortis*, a work which fifty years ago exercised as powerful a spell over the youth of Italy as Goethe's *Werther* over young Germany, Ugo Foscolo portrayed his friend Niccolini in the character of Lorenzo.

It may be said of Niccolini, with greater truth than of most poets, that his story was but the story of his works. In 1804 he first came before the public as an author, in a poem, in three cantos, entitled *La Pietà*, the subject of which was a fearful epidemic which had recently desolated Leghorn and the adjacent country.

This poem, written in *terza rima*, and a good deal clogged in its flight by its classic imagery, is full of the promise of future excellence, and has passages replete with grandeur, fire, and tenderness, though its effect as a whole be somewhat wearisome.

In 1810 the dramatist published his classical tragedy of *Polyxena*, which was crowned in that same year by the Academy Della Crusca. His *Medea*, which was in fact written before the *Polyxena*, did not

appear till a later period, and has remained one of the favourite tragedies of the Italian stage from that time till this. Several other classical tragedies followed hard upon these. Among them were *OEdipus*, *Ino* and *Themisto*, a version of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, and one of the *Seven before Thebes*. Besides these, he published, about this time, *Matilda*, a tragedy imitated from Home's *Douglas*.

It will hardly be credited, but it is nevertheless strictly true, that lavish praise and Della Cruscan laurels were the sole remuneration the young poet received for these his early works, and that he passed this period of his life in straitened and almost necessitous circumstances; for his father's pay had, of course, died with him years before, and his widowed mother was unable to give him much pecuniary help in his uphill struggle.

Then came the time of the so-called liberation of Italy by the great Corsican. The nation, long oppressed and craving for better things, eagerly grasped at the shows of freedom that were presented to it, strained, flashy, and fantastical as they were. While the land's best blood was being drained off without pity to recruit the conqueror's exhausted armies, there was much superficial stir and flutter over the whole peninsula about the revival of education after the most approved Greek and Roman fashion. During the reign of Elisa Bonaparte in Tuscany as Queen of Etruria, Niccolini was appointed secretary to the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, where he was also professor of history and mythology; and these two posts he filled until his death, more than half a century afterwards. Of the lectures which he delivered at the Academy, and of which, of course, only a few have ever been published, it is said, by those who formed part of the audience, that they were enthusiastically attended both by the students and the outside public. Although never gifted with the graces of ready eloquence, his manner was earnest and impressive, his reasoning clear and vivid, and, fearless and fervent in his political faith, he never failed, where the subject permitted him, to introduce illustrations and allusions drawn from the political events of the day, and this, too, after the downfall of Napoleon, when the tinsel fabric of the new Italian liberties had crumbled to ruin, and her old tyrants had settled down upon the land again with sharper beak and talons than before.

Such persistence in plain speaking, of course, rendered Niccolini obnoxious to the newly-restored Grand-Ducal government, and he, in common with all who were suspected of a taint of liberalism, was soon made the butt of a host of petty persecutions. An anecdote is related on good authority of the poet having, on one occasion, fallen into the hands of the Philistines after so comical a fashion that it deserves recording.

Just after the restoration of legitimacy in Tuscany the ridiculous mode of the pigtail, or *coda*, which had disappeared at the descent of the French army into Italy, began to acquire favour again among the higher classes of society, principally as the distinctive badge of men of the right-divine and high-Jesuit school. Every supple-backed courtier and petty placeman

who bowed, or hoped to bow, his way into the Pitti Palace and the august presence of Grand Duke Ferdinand the Third, displayed his six inches or so of *coda* duly garnished with black galloon. The name of *codino*, or pig-tail wearer, thus became applied to the supporters of the old régime, and is still used in the same sense at the present day throughout Italy, although the outward and visible pigtails of the legitimists have been long cut off. The Jacobins, as the liberals were called by the dominant party, had a hard time of it in those days in the streets of Florence, where the ignorant and degraded mob, set on by the priests, and only too ripe for mischief, was wont to attack and often severely maltreat those tailless ones suspected of Jacobinism who had the ill-fortune to fall in with them. Many a liberal wore a false tail to save his life. Many found no safety even in this transparent *ruse*, for the insolent rabble, not content with hooting at and jostling them, made a practice of insisting on testing the sincerity of their political creed by a stout pull at the dangling *coda*, shouting out the while in chorus the following elegant distich :—

If the tail comes off in your hand, you see,
A republican dog he's sure to be.
Hurrah, hurrah, with three times three!
And a kick behind for liberty!

If these dangers beset the more moderate liberals in their daily walks, Niccolini—sturdy, tailless Jacobin as he was—could hardly fail to expect the worst penalties enforced by mob law. His mother, who was living with him, old and timid, despite her Filiceja blood, trembled for her darling's safety, and insisted on his arraying himself in a false *coda*, to which, after much resistance, he consented, and the poor lady sewed it on with her own trembling hands. But the precaution was in vain, for not long afterwards falling in with a posse of ragamuffins, they fell upon him, pelted and insulted him, and applied their infallible test to his unwillingly worn pigtail, which, of course, all poor Signora Settimia's stitchery could not keep true to its duty. The tail came off; the hootings and jeerings of the mob rose louder than ever, and Niccolini, enraged to the last degree, turned upon his persecutors so fiercely, and did such execution among them, that he was forthwith arrested, and conveyed to the fortress, where he remained in prison some time.

The restored Grand Duke's reign, however, turned out a less evil time for Tuscany than it had at first appeared likely to become. The excellent Leopoldine laws kept down the encroachments of the clergy; a wise and good man, Fossombroni, presided over the councils of the Ministry, and made head against the insolent demands of Vienna. Political exiles flocked to Tuscany as to a haven of refuge where they might think in peace, and even trust the press now and then with a portion of their thoughts. There was much material prosperity to counterbalance a good deal of espionage, and an indifferentism in all ranks to political matters which took the semblance of content. Niccolini was about this time appointed librarian of the Palatine Library at the Pitti Palace. But the post was ill suited to his

outspoken character and independent spirit, and the petty annoyances and humiliations he had to endure in the discharge of its duties induced him very speedily to resign it, and return to his secretaryship at the Academy of Fine Arts.

In the year 1819, Niccolini's noble tragedy of *Nabucco* was published in London. The work is strictly classical in form, and little fitted for the stage; but it contains some of the finest poetry its author ever wrote, and is said to embody the story and fall of Napoleon, for whose greatness Niccolini felt more sympathy in its decline than at its zenith.

About this time, 1820, a literary newspaper, *L'Antologia*, was set on foot at Florence by Signor Viesseux. Among the contributors whose talent made its influence so salutary to Italian literature for the following ten years, was Niccolini, who, together with Tommaseo and Mazzini, wrote for it constantly during the whole period of its existence, and afterwards became, as well as Guerrazzi, one of the literary staff of the *Indicatore*, a paper which succeeded to the *Antologia*, though published at Leghorn. The mission of these two journals was to preach an enlightened liberalism in art and literature, and to bring about, if possible, a reconciliation between the classic and romantic schools. It was a grand triumph for the latter, when, in 1826, Niccolini published his *Antonio Foscarini*, a tragedy on the same story as Byron's *Foscari*. Its subject he had dared to take from Venetian history, and to treat with small regard for the sacred unities, despite the frantic entreaties of his classicist friends that he would not so outrage the ancient traditions of dramatic art, and of the self-styled "buon gusto Italiano."

Antonio Foscarini was brought out in February, 1827, at the Cocomero Theatre in Florence, and may be said to be the first romantic tragedy of native growth ever performed on an Italian stage. It made an immense success, and encouraged the poet to persevere in the new path he had struck out for himself.

Three years later, in 1830, Niccolini's fame as a dramatist reached its topmost height on the appearance of his tragedy of *John of Procida*, great part of which was written before *Antonio Foscarini*. Italy was just beginning to revive from her morbid indifferentism, and every barbed word aimed by the hero of the Sicilian Vespers at the oppressors of his country, struck fire from the hearts of an audience who felt with shame that their Tuscany was but a fief of Austria. The whole tragedy was a grand summons to revolt, and was indeed a powerful stimulant to the indignant popular feeling which caused the vain but gallant outbreak of the following year (1831) in various parts of Italy.

Never had the little Cocomero Theatre witnessed a triumph like that which welcomed the appearance of *John of Procida*. Crowds were waiting before the doors for hours before they opened. Every available foot of space was crammed with people; nay, high prices were paid for a nook in the ceiling of the theatre, or in the prompter's box. Every grand tirade against the foreign tyrants was received with a tempest of inarticulate

cries and sobs from the panting, trembling audience, who even shrieked out in concert with the actors such words as—

Why, why, should the sky smile so brightly
On the land of disgrace and despair?

Well might the Austrian Minister, Count de Bombelles, reply to the French Ambassador, who complained to him of the Tuscan government suffering such a play to be represented in Florence, that *John of Procida* was a letter addressed indeed to France, but that its contents were meant for Austria.

The tragedy of *Lodovico il Moro* was Niccolini's next work, and was published not long after the *John of Procida*, though the censorship, grown warier by experience, refused permission for its representation on the stage, and it was not acted till the revolution time of 1847. Shortly after *Lodovico il Moro*, Niccolini wrote *Rosmunda d'Inghilterra*, the story of which is taken from the old legend of Fair Rosamond. He likewise completed and published a translation of Shelley's *Cenci*, which has been greatly admired.

Niccolini was among the wise few in Italy who refused to be led away by the tempting voice of a reforming Pope. His gauntlet had been thrown down years before at the foot of the papal throne, in his great work, *Arnold of Brescia*, which was published at Marseilles in 1843, and smuggled into Tuscany through Leghorn by hundreds of copies at a time, in the very teeth of the Government, which, in impotent rage, prosecuted the publisher, M. Lemonnier of Florence, who had furnished the funds for printing it, and sent one of his compositors to Marseilles to see it through the press. *Arnold of Brescia*, though as a whole quite unfit for dramatic representation, has, in parts, the most dramatic power of any of the author's works, and is from the first scene to the last a mighty protest against spiritual and imperial tyranny, Pope and Emperor—

In whose embrace mankind is crushed to death!

In the onward march of the tragedy, the whole imagery of the bad old time, when priest and king carved out the world at will, seems to circle round the centre figure of the group, the noble enthusiast Arnold, going, clear of eye and firm of heart, to his martyrdom, and seeing, far away in the haze of distant centuries, a dawn of redemption for his beloved country. It was a great day for Niccolini, old, infirm, and near his death, but a greater day still for Italy, when, in 1860, the finest scenes of the *Arnoldo* were acted at the Cocomero, thenceforth re-named *Teatro Niccolini*. The dawn had risen at last on the emancipated people that listened breathlessly that night, and Arnold's triumphant death-prophecy had at length found its fulfilment. *Arnold of Brescia* closes the list of the poet's finest works. His subsequently published poems, with the exception of a few of the political sonnets, are a falling-off from his former greatness, both in power and grace. In his latter years his health became very infirm, and many and zealous were the attempts made by some high-Jesuit members of his family to extract from the venerable poet, in his hours of extreme weak-

ness, a retraction of his anti-Papal principles, and even to induce him to burn his unpublished writings. These, however, have fortunately escaped the flames of orthodoxy, and are being published, together with all his other works and his unfinished *History of the House of Suabia in Italy*, by Signor Corrado Gargioli, a young littérateur of distinguished merit, and an intimate friend of the deceased poet. Niccolini, like Giusti, lived and died a bachelor.

The pieces selected for translation have been taken from the most widely-known and certainly finest works of the poet. And they have been chosen rather with a view of enabling the reader to form some idea of the great dramatist's style, and manner of thought and expression, than with any hope of presenting an outline of any one of his works—a task scarcely possible of accomplishment within our available limits.

The first extract is from the *Antonio Foscarini*—the scene in which he meets his father, the Doge, after his return from his mission in Switzerland.

The second, from the *John of Procida*, is the patriot's address to his daughter Imelda on his return to Sicily.

The third, from the same play, is the speech in which the hero tells his friend Gualtiero that a king is needed for Italy. Long years after these lines were written, Niccolini quoted them to Victor Emmanuel in 1859.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth extracts are from the indisputably greatest work of the poet—the *Arnoldo of Brescia*.

The fourth is Arnold's address to the people of Rome.

The fifth contains several of the finest passages of the great scene between the reformer and the Pope, strung together, with as little breach in the continuity of the sense as possible.

The sixth is the soliloquy of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, as he watches the approach of Pope Adrian.



ANTONIO FOSCARINI.—ACT I. SCENE 4.

Antonio Foscarini. The Doge.

Doge.—Once more in thine embrace
I weep glad tears, and feast my weary eyes
On thy dear face again. We'll part no more!
Thy father gains, though the republic lose thee.

Ant.—Better for me to live my life apart
From cares of state, and only seek repute
For household virtues, in a land like this,
Where the fierce mastery of the few still makes
The crown a chastisement.

Alas! how changed,
Father! I find thee now. Thou hast put on
The purple of the slave; this palace wall,
This city's self, thy prison; first to serve,
Last to command, here men have learnt to scorn

The sovereign in the Doge, and he is grown
 A wholesome butt for rude patrician pride,
 As was the drunken Helot of old time
 The laughing-stock for Spartan boys !

Doge.— Not so !

This yoke exalts its wearer ; here, the law
 Rules over all ; and I, my son ! am throned
 In pomp, a king—a citizen in power !

Ant.—Oh, thou art worthy of a better age,
 A better people. Answer, on thy truth,
 Is this a Commonwealth ?—this State where man
 Exists but lives not, or where so-called life
 Is an unending terror which o'errules
 Noble and clown alike, and each aspires
 To grow a tyrant from a voiceless slave ?

Doge.—The old reproach ! Thou hast been taught to rail
 Against the State thou darest to disturb,
 By the example of Helvetian boors.
 But the free bounty of Italia's clime
 Disdains the virtues bred from penury.....
 True ! in the few lives manhood ; all the rest
 Are a mere herd : yet where one fear restrains
 Patrician and plebeian, *there* is Venice !

Ant.—She needs not tremble if she count her tyrants.
 What path a people grown corrupt may tread
 From its old vices back to liberty
 I know not, Doge ! but how canst thou extol—
 Thou, soldier, and thou, sire—the cruel sway
 Which punishes a thought more than a crime,
 And muffles justice up to seem revenge ?

Doge.—Her fame and not her force it is defends
 Our city 'gainst her foes ; and I commend—
 The rule that keeps us scathless.

Ant.— To such praise
 The shriek of unknown victims, done to death
 By unknown tyrants, can make no reply.
 The livid wave that spreads so listlessly
 Between this fatal palace and the prisons,
 Hangs moaning o'er their miserable heads,
 Stifling the echo that but tells of pain.
 Here with mute foot goes death about his work,
 And bloodshed leaves no stain upon the floor !

Doge.—Ours is the pain. The subject crowd enjoys
 The sway thou dar'st condemn, and deems in us,
 Who tremble while we reign, its wrongs avenged.
 The State, be sure, could not endure a change.
 I see no glut of punishment ; but wealth,
 Banquet, and dance, and show, and tranquil days
 Make Venice glad.....

Ant.—Ay ! thou too wouldest infer
 A prostrate people's gladness from its vices.
 There is a slavery that hath no bonds,
 No bloodshed. There's a prudent tyranny
 Which pardons—and degrades. Out of thy heart
 The lazy despot's mean example steals

All manliness. 'Tis that depraves the soul
 Even while it keeps it down. The base excess
 Of joyless pleasure doth but sate and shame
 The low-born crowd. Ah! manhood hath been waked
 Ere now by chains and stripes ; but worst of all,
 The tyrant who destroys men with a sleep !

—♦♦—
JOHN OF PROCIDA.—ACT II. SCENE 2.

John of Procida addressing his daughter.

I should have entered here
 In deepest night, unlooked for, and unknown,
 Like my revenge. But now this woe-sick heart,
 Weary of hate, feels every pulse grow mild
 In the sweet presence of my childhood's home
 Erewhile I wept to see the rising sun
 Light up my native city's every tower,
 Unveiling all Palermo. Ah ! thou know'st not
 What sweetness clings about the soil of home,
 What longings haunt the exile, and how hard
 To near the walls where none awaits his coming !
 Thou may'st desert thy country, but, Imelda,
 Forget her, never ! In my pilgrim days
 Fair cities I beheld, many and strange ;
 Not one that spoke a memory to the heart :
 And fairer than each scene that met my view
 Seemed the dear land my thought went back to love.

—♦♦—
JOHN OF PROCIDA.—ACT II. SCENE 3.

John of Procida, to his friend Gualtiero.

Gualtiero ! think
 What Italy is now. It needs not say
 To thee, a Ghibelline, how dire a foe
 Is kingly power to liberty. Yet hero
 Methinks our first need is a mighty king :
 A king whose sceptre is the sword, whose helm
 His royal crown ; one who should harmonize
 Men's wrangling wills to concord ; bind, heal up
 Italy's slavish stripes ; regenerate her,
 Till she, whose province once was all the world,
 Herself a subject province be no more—
 The jest and prey of strangers. No more wars
 Whose victories are disgrace ; for that great king
 Should bear him like the sun, when with dim clouds—
 Blind brethren battling in their wrath—he strives,
 Till cruel darkness is at last o'ercome,
 And each the other knowing once again,
 With one embrace they all break forth in tears !

ARNOLD OF BRESCIA.—ACT I. SCENE 3.

Arnold. People of Rome.

People.— What power can save us ?
Arnold.— Liberty—and God !

The voices of the East,
 The voices of the West ;
 The voices from thy wilderness, O Rome !
 The voices echoing from each gaping tomb,
 Harlot ! cry shame on thee, who, drunk with blood
 Of martyred saints, hast done thy wanton will
 With all the kings of earth ! Woe to her ! Woe !
 See where she sits, all purple, gems, and gold,
 Bowed down by costly chains.

Her snow-white robes,
 The robes to her first bridegroom—now on high—
 So precious, long since trampled in the mire.
 Therefore vain words of blasphemy she speaks,
 And on her brow is written, *Mystery*.
 Ah ! now no more to comfort those who mourn
 Her voice comes forth ; she hath but threats for all,
 And by her endless curses doth create
 In timid souls ineffable dismay.
 When in their common woe poor wretches try—
 We all are wretched here—for such relief
 As love close linked affords, she sundereth them,
 In Christ's name, ruthlessly ! Fathers with sons
 She sets at feud ; tears husbands from their wives ;
 'Twixt loving brothers sows the seeds of war,
 And doth so fiercely garble Holy Writ
 That men learn hatred from the Book of Love.....
 Lord ! they who fled before Thy scourge of old,
 Now on the threshold of Thy temple porch
 Trade in dumb beasts no more ; but in thy fane
 Mankind is bought and sold, and thy dear blood,
 O Son of God ! is changed away for gold !

ARNOLD OF BRESCIA.—ACT II. SCENE 8.

*Pope Adrian. Arnold.**Arnold.—* Say, art thou Pope or King ?

This second name

Was never heard in Rome ; and if thou be
 Christ's vicar, thou shouldest know the crown He wore
 Was but a crown of thorns.

Adrian.— The word of God
 Created this great world, mine guides its course !
 Arnold ! beware. Thy words are empty breath ;
 Mere noise that here dies out and straight is lost
 In the wide waste of Rome. My voice alone
 The world takes up and echoes back again.

Arnold.— Thy words ne'er told of freedom. Set on high
 'Twixt man and his oppressors, still the Church

Lashes the weak, and cringes to the strong,
And still within the merciless embrace
Which kings with priests exchange, mankind is crushed,
Panting for life. O supreme Pastors ! ye
Look on while kings in merry mood make sport
Of human lives ; and o'er the ruthless claims
Of iron power, and o'er such shapes of crime
As pagan tyrants never dared to dream,
Ye spread the papal robe——and all is night.....

Adrian.— . . . The Roman shepherd scorns a bounded
realm ;

Since he hath reigned Lord of the Infinite !

Arnold.— . . . What more ? Thou slay'st the flock
beneath thy care

With the barbarian's sword, yet dost protest
Thou'rt guiltless of their blood. Alas ! thy works
So jar against thy words, that still the true
Thou mak'st a lie, and then a lie the truth.
Servant of servants thou proclaim'st thyself,
Yet art of tyrants tyrant. Still one thought
Goes with thee through the ages for all time.
Thou would'st a priesthood militant, and rulest
By the blind terror of thy mystic words,
Proud in thy seeming meekness, fighting on
As king, and cursing ever on as priest ;
And never art thou priest nor king for long ;
But conquered, on the altar tak'st thy place,
And conquering, on the throne.....

Ye, ruthless priests ! would fain see crime grow rife,
That crime may breed remorse, which doth beget
The ill-starred wealth men's orphaned sons lament
While you rejoice. Wont to clutch all ye can
And give but what ye must, ye make a trade
Of fear and falsehood, and your caste grows fat
On a blind herd that to the altar flies
From crime, and from the altar back to crime.
Yet if, starvation-stung, it dare disturb
The golden ease you say you hold of God,
Ye cry aloud forsooth !.....

In very deed

The priesthood doth fulfil the hope of Rome,
The burden vile of human love lays down,
And with the thankless passion of the beast
Forgets the mother, and ignores the child !.....
And wherefore would'st thou mingle life with death ?
Why long'st thou to belie the word of God
Which saith, "My kingdom is not of this world ?"
Follow the steps of Christ and Rome.

Her will

It hath been ever, and the will of God,
To raise the humble and abase the proud.
I'll kiss thy foot——set on the necks of Kings !.....

Adrian.—The Church in every land hath sons. I reign
An unseem king, and Rome is everywhere !

Arnold.—Adrian ! thou cheat'st thyself. The bolts of Rome
Are weak to rouse men's fears, and Reason now

Plucks at the bonds ye hoped might last for aye:
One day she'll burst them.

Yet but half awake

The mind of man already so rebels,
That curb it thou canst not. Christ calls to it,
As to the sick of yore, "Arise, and walk!"
Lead it, or it will tread thee under foot.
The world has learnt a truth not grown in shrines,
And spurns a Church that shuts it out from Heaven.
Thou wast a shepherd; be henceforth a father!
Mankind is sick of being called a flock.
Too often, chastened by the pastoral staff,
Trembling, it hath stopped short upon its way.
Why in the name of Heaven dost tread down man,
The last-begotten of the thought of God!

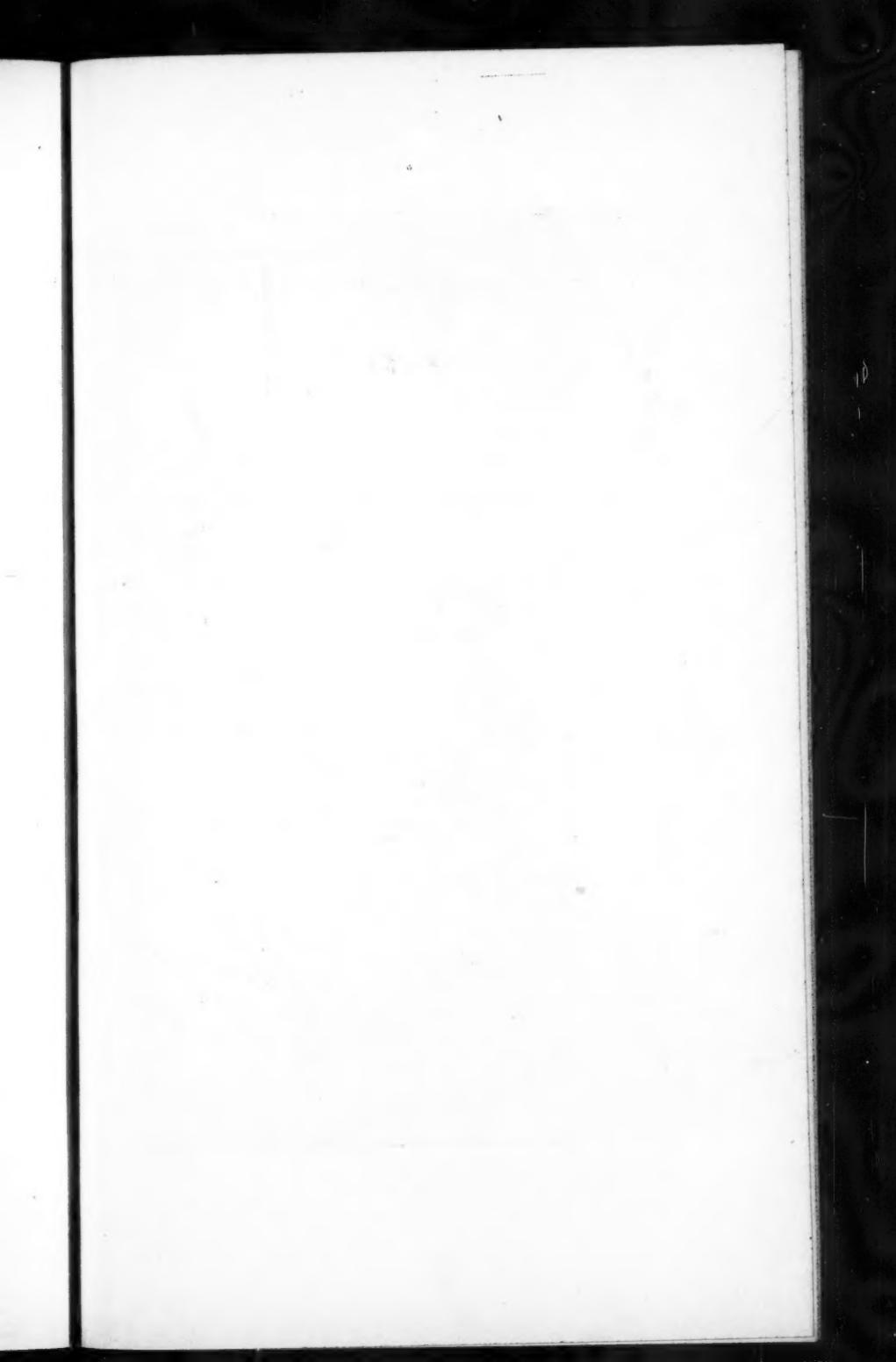
ARNOLD OF BRESCIA.—ACT IV., SCENE 10.

Frederick Barbarossa, dismounting from his horse.

I leave thee here, brave steed! my comrade true
In every danger, and along the track
Which should have echoed to thy sounding hoofs
I tread with noiseless foot my humble way.
What do I see! The Pontiff hitherward,
Servant of servants, comes in placid pride
On his white palfrey, docile to the curb
As he would have us kings! Along the path
By which Pope Adrian passes, one vast throng
Of people, soldiers, either sex, all ranks,
Fused in blind worship, struggles, heaves, falls prone,
One heaped above another; so that men
By God created to look up to Heaven
Are made as 'twere mere stepping-stones to pride.....
Ay! if the horse thou dost bestride tread out
The life of such a worshipper, thou'l say
The gates of Heaven fly open for his soul!
We share not earth's dominion, thou and I,
Alone thou rul'st the world!.....

He doth not turn

This way, nor greet me with that haughty head
Which wears the triple crown. All things he sees
Far, far below—like God. Hark! murmured prayers;
Then, silence!—With a blessing he moves on!
Well; is it strange this priest should scorn to let
His proud foot touch the earth, when monarchs' lips
He bids bow down and kiss it?





UNWELCOME ATTENTIONS.

Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XII.

PREPARING FOR THE WEDDING.



MEANWHILE the love-affairs between the middle-aged couple were prospering well, after a fashion; after the fashion that they liked best, although it might probably have appeared dull and prosaic to younger people. Lord Cumnor had come down in great glee at the news he had heard from his wife at the Towers. He, too, seemed to think he had taken an active part in bringing about the match by only speaking about it. His first words on the subject to Lady Cumnor were,—

“I told you so. Now didn’t I say what a good, suitable affair this affair between Gibson and Clare would be! I don’t know when I have been so much pleased. You

may despise the trade of match-maker, my lady, but I am very proud of it. After this, I shall go on looking out for suitable cases among the middle-aged people of my acquaintance. I shan’t meddle with young folks, they are so apt to be fanciful; but I have been so successful in this, that I do think it is good encouragement to go on.”

“Go on—with what?” asked Lady Cumnor, drily. “Oh, planning!”

“You can’t deny that I planned this match.”

“I don’t think you are likely to do either much good or harm by planning,” she replied, with cool, good sense.

“It puts it into people’s heads, my dear.”

“Yes, if you speak about your plans to them, of course it does. But in this case you never spoke to either Mr. Gibson, or Clare, did you?”

All at once the recollection of how Clare had come upon the passage in Lord Cumnor’s letter flashed on his lady, but she did not

say anything about it, but left her husband to flounder about as best he might.

"No! I never spoke to them; of course not."

"Then you must be strongly mesmeric, and your will acted upon theirs, if you are to take credit for any part in the affair," continued his pitiless wife.

"I really can't say. It's no use looking back to what I said or did. I'm very well satisfied with it, and that's enough, and I mean to show them how much I'm pleased. I shall give Clare something towards her rigging out, and they shall have a breakfast at Ashcombe Manor-house. I'll write to Preston about it. When did you say they were to be married?"

"I think they'd better wait till Christmas, and I have told them so. It would amuse the children, going over to Ashcombe for the wedding; and if it's bad weather during the holidays I'm always afraid of their finding it dull at the Towers. It's very different if it's a good frost, and they can go out skating and sledging in the park. But these last two years it has been so wet for them, poor dears!"

"And will the other poor dears be content to wait to make a holiday for your grandchildren? 'To make a Roman holiday.' Pope, or somebody else, has a line of poetry like that. 'To make a Roman holiday,'" —he repeated, pleased with his unusual aptitude at quotation.

"It's Byron, and it's nothing to do with the subject in hand. I'm surprised at your lordship's quoting Byron,—he was a very immoral poet."

"I saw him take his oaths in the House of Lords," said Lord Cumnor, apologetically.

"Well! the less said about him the better," said Lady Cumnor. "I have told Clare that she had better not think of being married before Christmas; and it won't do for her to give up her school in a hurry either."

But Clare did not intend to wait till Christmas; and for this once she carried her point against the will of the countess, and without many words, or any open opposition. She had a harder task in setting aside Mr. Gibson's desire to have Cynthia over for the wedding, even if she went back to her school at Boulogne directly after the ceremony. At first she had said that it would be delightful, a charming plan; only she feared that she must give up her own wishes to have her child near her at such a time, on account of the expense of the double journey.

But Mr. Gibson, economical as he was in his habitual expenditure, had a really generous heart. He had already shown it, in entirely relinquishing his future wife's life-interest in the very small property the late Mr. Kirkpatrick had left, in favour of Cynthia; while he arranged that she should come to his home as a daughter as soon as she left the school she was at. The life-interest was about thirty pounds a year. Now he

gave Mrs. Kirkpatrick three five-pound notes, saying that he hoped they would do away with the objections to Cynthia's coming over to the wedding; and at the time Mrs. Kirkpatrick felt as if they would, and caught the reflection of his strong wish, and fancied it was her own. If the letter could have been written and the money sent off that day while the reflected glow of affection lasted, Cynthia would have been bridesmaid to her mother. But a hundred little interruptions came in the way of letter-writing; and the value affixed to the money had increased: money had been so much needed, so hardly earned in Mrs. Kirkpatrick's life; while the perhaps necessary separation of mother and child had lessened the amount of affection the former had to bestow. So she persuaded herself, afresh, that it would be unwise to disturb Cynthia at her studies; to interrupt the fulfilment of her duties just after the *semestre* had begun afresh; and she wrote a letter to Madame Lefevre so well induced with this persuasion, that an answer which was almost an echo of her words was returned, the sense of which being conveyed to Mr. Gibson, who was no great French scholar, settled the vexed question, to his moderate but unfeigned regret. But the fifteen pounds were not returned. Indeed, not merely that sum, but a great part of the hundred which Lord Cumnor had given her for her trousseau, was required to pay off debts at Ashcombe; for the school had been anything but flourishing since Mrs. Kirkpatrick had had it. It was really very much to her credit that she preferred clearing herself from debt to purchasing wedding finery. But it was one of the few points to be respected in Mrs. Kirkpatrick that she had always been careful in payment to the shops where she dealt; it was a little sense of duty cropping out. Whatever other faults might arise from her superficial and flimsy character, she was always uneasy till she was out of debt. Yet she had no scruple in appropriating her future husband's money to her own use, when it was decided that it was not to be employed as he intended. What new articles she bought for herself, were all such as would make a show, and an impression upon the ladies of Hollingford. She argued with herself that linen, and all under-clothing, would never be seen; while she knew that every gown she had, would give rise to much discussion and would be counted up in the little town.

So her stock of underclothing was very small, and scarcely any of it new; but it was made of dainty material, and was finely mended up by her deft fingers, many a night long after her pupils were in bed; inwardly resolving all the time she sewed, that hereafter some one else should do her plain-work. Indeed, many a little circumstance of former subjection to the will of others rose up before her during these quiet hours, as an endurance or a suffering never to occur again. So apt are people to look forward to a different kind of life from that to which they have been accustomed, as being free from care and trial! She recollects how, one time during this very summer at the Towers, after she was engaged to Mr. Gibson, when she had taken above an hour to arrange her hair

in some new mode carefully studied from Mrs. Bradley's fashion-book—after all, when she came down, looking her very best, as she thought, and ready for her lover, Lady Cumnor had sent her back again to her room, just as if she had been a little child, to do her hair over again, and not to make such a figure of fun of herself! Another time she had been sent to change her gown for one in her opinion far less becoming, but which suited Lady Cumnor's taste better. These were little things; but they were late samples of what in different shapes she had had to endure for many years; and her liking for Mr. Gibson grew in proportion to her sense of the evils from which he was going to serve as a means of escape. After all, that interval of hope and plain-sewing, intermixed though it was by tuition, was not disagreeable. Her wedding-dress was secure. Her former pupils at the Towers were going to present her with that; they were to dress her from head to foot on the auspicious day. Lord Cumnor, as has been said, had given her a hundred pounds for her trousseau, and had sent Mr. Preston a carte-blanche order for the wedding-breakfast in the old hall in Ashcombe Manor-house. Lady Cumnor—a little put out by the marriage not being deferred till her grandchildren's Christmas holidays—had nevertheless given Mrs. Kirkpatrick an excellent English-made watch and chain; more clumsy but more serviceable than the little foreign elegance that had hung at her side so long, and misled her so often.

Her preparations were thus in a very considerable state of forwardness, while Mr. Gibson had done nothing as yet towards any new arrangement or decoration of his house for his intended bride. He knew he ought to do something. But what? Where to begin, when so much was out of order, and he had so little time for superintendence? At length he came to the wise decision of asking one of the Miss Brownings to take the trouble of preparing all that was immediately requisite in his house, for old friendship's sake; and resolved to leave all the more ornamental decorations that he proposed, to the taste of his future wife. But before making his request to Miss Brownings he had to tell them of his engagement, which had hitherto been kept a secret from the townspeople, who had set down his frequent visits at the Towers to the score of the countess's health. He felt how he should have laughed in his sleeve at any middle-aged widower who came to him with a confession of the kind he had now to make to Miss Brownings, and disliked the idea of the necessary call: but it was to be done, so one evening he went in "promiscuous," as they called it, and told them his story. At the end of the first chapter—that is to say, at the end of the story of Mr. Coxe's calf-love, Miss Browning held up her hands in surprise.

"To think of Molly, as I have held in long-clothes, coming to have a lover! Well, to be sure! Sister Phœbe—" (she was just coming into the room), "here's a piece of news! Molly Gibson has got a lover! One may almost say she's had an offer! Mr. Gibson, may not one?—and she's but sixteen!"

"Seventeen, sister," said Miss Phœbe, who piqued herself on knowing all about dear Mr. Gibson's domestic affairs. "Seventeen, the 22nd of last June."

"Well, have it your own way. Seventeen, if you like to call her so!" said Miss Browning, impatiently. "The fact is still the same—she's got a lover; and it seems to me she was in long-clothes only yesterday."

"I'm sure I hope her course of true love will run smooth," said Miss Phœbe.

Now Mr. Gibson came in; for his story was not half told, and he did not want them to run away too far with the idea of Molly's love-affair.

"Molly knows nothing about it. I haven't even named it to any one but you two, and to one other friend. I trounced Coxe well, and did my best to keep his attachment—as he calls it—in bounds. But I was sadly puzzled what to do about Molly. Miss Eyre was away, and I couldn't leave them in the house together without any older woman."

"Oh, Mr. Gibson! why did you not send her to us?" broke in Miss Browning. "We would have done anything in our power for you; for your sake, as well as her poor dear mother's."

"Thank you. I know you would, but it wouldn't have done to have had her in Hollingsford, just at the time of Coxe's effervescence. He's better now. His appetite has come back with double force, after the fasting he thought it right to exhibit. He had three helpings of blackcurrant dumpling yesterday."

"I am sure you are most liberal, Mr. Gibson. Three helpings! And, I daresay, butcher's meat in proportion?"

"Oh! I only named it because, with such very young men, it's generally see-saw between appetite and love, and I thought the third helping a very good sign. But still, you know, what has happened once, may happen agin."

"I don't know. Pheebe had an offer of marriage once—" said Miss Browning.

"Hush! sister. It might hurt his feelings to have it spoken about."

"Nonsense, child! It's five-and-twenty years ago; and his eldest daughter is married herself."

"I own he has not been constant," pleaded Miss Phœbe, in her tender, piping voice. "All men are not—like you, Mr. Gibson—faithful to the memory of their first love."

Mr. Gibson winced. Jeannie was his first love; but her name had never been breathed in Hollingsford. His wife—good, pretty, sensible, and beloved as she had been—was not his second; no, nor his third love. And now he was come to make a confidence about his second marriage.

"Well, well," said he; "at any rate, I thought I must do something

to protect Molly from such affairs while she was so young, and before I had given my sanction. Miss Eyre's little nephew fell ill of scarlet fever——”

“Ah! by-the-by, how careless of me not to inquire. How is the poor little fellow?”

“Worse—better. It doesn't signify to what I've got to say now; the fact was, Miss Eyre couldn't come back to my house for some time, and I cannot leave Molly altogether at Hamley.”

“Ah! I see now, why there was that sudden visit to Hamley. Upon my word, it's quite a romance.”

“I do like hearing of a love-affair,” murmured Miss Phœbe.

“Then if you'll let me get on with my story, you shall hear of mine,” said Mr. Gibson, quite beyond his patience with their constant interruptions.

“Yours!” said Miss Phœbe, faintly.

“Bless us and save us!” said Miss Browning, with less sentiment in her tone; “what next?”

“My marriage, I hope,” said Mr. Gibson, choosing to take her expression of intense surprise literally. “And that's what I came to speak to you about.”

A little hope darted up in Miss Phœbe's breast. She had often said to her sister, in the confidence of curling-time (ladies wore curls in those days), “that the only man who could ever bring her to think of matrimony was Mr. Gibson; but that if he ever proposed, she should feel bound to accept him, for poor dear Mary's sake;” never explaining what exact style of satisfaction she imagined she should give to her dead friend by marrying her late husband. Phœbe played nervously with the strings of her black silk apron. Like the Caliph in the Eastern story, a whole lifetime of possibilities passed through her mind in an instant, of which possibilities the question of questions was, Could she leave her sister? Attend, Phœbe, to the present moment, and listen to what is being said before you distress yourself with a perplexity which will never arise.

“Of course it has been an anxious thing for me to decide who I should ask to be the mistress of my family, the mother of my girl; but I think I've decided rightly at last. The lady I have chosen——”

“Tell us at once who she is, there's a good man,” said straightforward Miss Browning.

“Mrs. Kirkpatrick,” said the bridegroom elect.

“What! the governess at the Towers, that the countess makes so much of?”

“Yes; she is much valued by them—and deservedly so. She keeps a school now at Ashcombe, and is accustomed to housekeeping. She has brought up the young ladies at the Towers, and has a daughter of her own, therefore it is probable she will have a kind, motherly feeling towards Molly.”

"She's a very elegant-looking woman," said Miss Phœbe, feeling it incumbent upon her to say something laudatory, by way of concealing the thoughts that had just been passing through her mind. "I've seen her in the carriage, riding backwards with the countess; a very pretty woman, I should say."

"Nonsense, sister," said Miss Browning. "What has her elegance or prettiness to do with the affair? Did you ever know a widower marry again for such trifles as those? It's always from a sense of duty of one kind or another—isn't it, Mr. Gibson? They want a housekeeper; or they want a mother for their children; or they think their last wife would have liked it."

Perhaps the thought had passed through the elder sister's mind that Phœbe might have been chosen, for there was a sharp acrimony in her tone; not unfamiliar to Mr. Gibson, but with which he did not choose to cope at this present moment.

"You must have it your own way, Miss Browning. Settle my motives for me. I don't pretend to be quite clear about them myself. But I am clear in wishing heartily to keep my old friends, and for them to love my future wife for my sake. I don't know any two women in the world, except Molly and Mrs. Kirkpatrick, I regard as much as I do you. Besides, I want to ask you if you will let Molly come and stay with you till after my marriage?"

"You might have asked us before you asked Madame Hamley," said Miss Browning, only half mollified. "We are your old friends; and we were her mother's friends, too; though we are not county folk."

"That's unjust," said Mr. Gibson. "And you know it is."

"I don't know. You are always with Lord Hollingsford, when you can get at him, much more than you ever are with Mr. Goodenough, or Mr. Smith. And you are always going over to Hamley."

Miss Browning was not one to give in all at once.

"I seek Lord Hollingsford as I should seek such a man, whatever his rank or position might be: usher to a school, carpenter, shoemaker, if it were possible for them to have had a similar character of mind developed by similar advantages. Mr. Goodenough is a very clever attorney, with strong local interests and not a thought beyond."

"Well, well, don't go on arguing, it always gives me a headache, as Phœbe knows. I didn't mean what I said, that's enough, isn't it? I'll retract anything sooner than be reasoned with. Where were we before you began your arguments?"

"About dear little Molly coming to pay us a visit," said Miss Phœbe.

"I should have asked you at first, only Coxe was so rampant with his love. I didn't know what he might do, or how troublesome he might be both to Molly and you. But he has cooled down now. Absence has had a very tranquillizing effect, and I think Molly may be in the same town with him, without any consequences beyond a few sighs every time she's brought to his mind by meeting her. And I've got another favour

to ask of you, so you see it would never do for me to argue with you, Miss Browning, when I ought to be a humble suppliant. Something must be done to the house to make it all ready for the future Mrs. Gibson. It wants painting and papering shamefully, and I should think some new furniture, but I'm sure I don't know what. Would you be so very kind as to look over the place, and see how far a hundred pounds will go? The dining-room walls must be painted; we'll keep the drawing-room paper for her choice, and I've a little spare money for that room for her to lay out; but all the rest of the house I'll leave to you, if you'll only be kind enough to help an old friend."

This was a commission which exactly gratified Miss Browning's love of power. The disposal of money involved patronage of tradespeople, such as she had exercised in her father's lifetime, but had had very little chance of showing since his death. Her usual good-humour was quite restored by this proof of confidence in her taste and economy, while Miss Phoebe's imagination dwelt rather on the pleasure of a visit from Molly.

CHAPTER XIII.

MOLLY GIBSON'S NEW FRIENDS.

TIME was speeding on; it was now the middle of August,—if anything was to be done to the house, it must be done at once. Indeed, in several ways Mr. Gibson's arrangements with Miss Browning had not been made too soon. The squire had heard that Osborne might probably return home for a few days before going abroad; and, though the growing intimacy between Roger and Molly did not alarm him in the least, yet he was possessed by a very hearty panic lest the heir might take a fancy to the surgeon's daughter; and he was in such a fidget for her to leave the house before Osborne came home, that his wife lived in constant terror lest he should make it too obvious to their visitor.

Every young girl of seventeen or so, who is at all thoughtful, is very apt to make a Pope out of the first person who presents to her a new or larger system of duty than that by which she has been unconsciously guided hitherto. Such a Pope was Roger to Molly; she looked to his opinion, to his authority on almost every subject, yet he had only said one or two things in a terse manner which gave them the force of precepts—stable guides to her conduct, and had shown the natural superiority in wisdom and knowledge which is sure to exist between a highly educated young man of no common intelligence, and an ignorant girl of seventeen, who yet was well capable of appreciation. Still, although they were drawn together in this very pleasant relationship, each was imagining some one very different for the future owner of their whole heart—their highest and completest love. Roger looked to find a grand woman, his equal, and his empress; beautiful in person, serene in wisdom, ready for counsel,

as was Egeria. Molly's little wavering maiden fancy dwelt on the unseen Osborne, who was now a troubadour, and now a knight, such as he wrote about in one of his own poems; some one like Osborne, perhaps, rather than Osborne himself, for she shrank from giving a personal form and name to the hero that was to be. The squire was not unwise in wishing her well out of the house before Osborne came home, if he was considering her peace of mind. Yet, when she went away from the hall he missed her constantly; it had been so pleasant to have her there fulfilling all the pretty offices of a daughter; cheering the meals, so often tête-à-tête betwixt him and Roger, with her innocent wise questions, her lively interest in their talk, her merry replies to his banter.

And Roger missed her too. Sometimes her remarks had probed into his mind, and excited him to the deep thought in which he delighted; at other times he had felt himself of real help to her in her hours of need, and in making her take an interest in books, which treated of higher things than the continual fiction and poetry which she had hitherto read. He felt something like an affectionate tutor who was suddenly deprived of his most promising pupil; he wondered how she would go on without him; whether she would be puzzled and disheartened by the books he had lent her to read; how she and her stepmother would get along together? She occupied his thoughts a good deal those first few days after she left the hall. Mrs. Hamley regretted her more, and longer than did the other two. She had given her the place of a daughter in her heart; and now she missed the sweet feminine companionship, the playful caresses, the never-ceasing attentions; the very need of sympathy in her sorrows, that Molly had shown so openly from time to time; all these things had extremely endeared her to the tender-hearted Mrs. Hamley.

Molly, too, felt the change of atmosphere keenly; and she blamed herself for so feeling even more keenly still. But she could not help having a sense of refinement, which had made her appreciate the whole manner of being at the Hall. By her dear old friends the Miss Brownings she was petted and caressed so much that she became ashamed of noticing the coarser and louder tones in which they spoke, the provincialism of their pronunciation, the absence of interest in things, and their greediness of details about persons. They asked her questions which she was puzzled enough to answer about her future stepmother; her loyalty to her father forbidding her to reply fully and truthfully. She was always glad when they began to make inquiries as to every possible affair at the Hall. She had been so happy there; she liked them all, down to the very dogs, so thoroughly, that it was easy work replying: she did not mind telling them everything, even to the style of Mrs. Hamley's invalid dress; nor what wine the squire drank at dinner. Indeed, talking about these things helped her to recall the happiest time in her life. But one evening, as they were all sitting together after tea in the little upstairs drawing-room, looking into the High Street—Molly discoursing away on the various pleasures of Hamley Hall, and just then telling of all Roger's wisdom in

natural science, and some of the curiosities he had shown her, she was suddenly pulled up by this little speech,—

" You seem to have seen a great deal of Mr. Roger, Molly ! " said Miss Browning, in a way intended to convey a great deal of meaning to her sister and none at all to Molly. But—

The man recovered of the bite ;
The dog it was that died.

Molly was perfectly aware of Miss Browning's emphatic tone, though at first she was perplexed as to its cause; while Miss Phœbe was just then too much absorbed in knitting the heel of her stocking to be fully alive to her sister's words and winks.

" Yes ; he was very kind to me," said Molly, slowly, pondering over Miss Browning's manner, and unwilling to say more until she had satisfied herself to what the question tended.

" I daresay you will soon be going to Hamley Hall again ? He's not the eldest son, you know, Phœbe ! Don't make my head ache with your eternal ' eighteen, nineteen,' but attend to the conversation. Molly is telling us how much she saw of Mr. Roger, and how kind he was to her. I've always heard he was a very nice young man, my dear. Tell us some more about him ! Now, Phœbe, attend ! How was he kind to you, Molly ? "

" Oh, he told me what books to read ; and one day he made me notice how many bees I saw——"

" Bees, child ! What do you mean ? Either you or he must have been crazy ! "

" No, not at all. There are more than two hundred kinds of bees in England, and he wanted me to notice the difference between them and flies. Miss Browning, I can't help seeing what you fancy," said Molly, as red as fire, " but it is very wrong ; it is all a mistake. I won't speak another word about Mr. Roger or Hamley at all, if it puts such silly notions into your head.

" Highty-tighty ! Here's a young lady to be lecturing her elders ! Silly notions, indeed ! They are in your head, it seems. And let me tell you, Molly, you are too young to let your mind be running on lovers."

Molly had been once or twice called saucy and impertinent, and certainly a little sauciness came out now.

" I never said what the 'silly notion' was, Miss Browning ; did I now, Miss Phœbe ? Don't you see, dear Miss Phœbe, it is all her own interpretation, and according to her own fancy, this foolish talk about lovers ? "

Molly was flaming with indignation ; but she had appealed to the wrong person for justice. Miss Phœbe tried to make peace after the fashion of weak-minded persons, who would cover over the unpleasant sight of a sore, instead of trying to heal it.

" I'm sure I don't know anything about it, my dear. It seems to me that what Clarinda was saying was very true—very true indeed ; and I

think, love, you misunderstood her ; or, perhaps, she misunderstood you ; or I may be misunderstanding it altogether ; so we'd better not talk any more about it. What price did you say you were going to give for the drugged in Mr. Gibson's dining-room, sister ?"

So Miss Browning and Molly went on till evening, each chafed and angry with the other. They wished each other good-night, going through the usual forms in the coolest manner possible. Molly went up to her little bedroom, clean and neat as a bedroom could be, with draperies of small delicate patchwork—bed-curtains, window-curtains, and counterpane ; a japanned toilette-table, full of little boxes, with small looking-glass affixed to it, that distorted every face that was so unwise as to look in it. This room had been to the child one of the most dainty and luxurious places ever seen, in comparison with her own bare, white-dimity bedroom ; and now she was sleeping in it, as a guest, and all the quaint adornments she had once peeped at as a great favour, as they were carefully wrapped up in cap-paper, were set out for her use. And yet how little she had deserved this hospitable care ; how impertinent she had been ; how cross she had felt ever since ! She was crying tears of penitence and youthful misery when there came a low tap to the door. Molly opened it, and there stood Miss Browning, in a wonderful erection of a nightcap, and scantily attired in a coloured calico jacket over her scrimpy and short white petticoat.

" I was afraid you were asleep, child," said she, coming in and shutting the door. " But I wanted to say to you we've got wrong to-day, somehow ; and I think it was perhaps my doing. It's as well Phoebe shouldn't know, for she thinks me perfect ; and when there's only two of us, we get along better if one of us thinks the other can do no wrong. But I rather think I was a little cross. We'll not say any more about it, Molly ; only we'll go to sleep friends,—and friends we'll always be, child, won't we ? Now give me a kiss, and don't cry and swell your eyes up ; and put out your candle carefully."

" I was wrong—it was my fault," said Molly, kissing her.

" Fiddlestick-ends ! Don't contradict me ! I say it was my fault, and I won't hear another word about it."

The next day Molly went with Miss Browning to see the changes going on in her father's house. To her they were but dismal improvements. The faint grey of the dining-room walls, which had harmonized well enough with the deep crimson of the moreen curtains, and which when well cleaned looked thinly coated rather than dirty, was now exchanged for a pink salmon-colour of a very glowing hue ; and the new curtains were of that pale sea-green just coming into fashion. " Very bright and pretty," Miss Browning called it ; and in the first renewing of their love Molly could not bear to contradict her. She could only hope that the green and brown drugget would tone down the brightness and prettiness. There was scaffolding here, scaffolding there, and Betty scolding everywhere.

"Come up now, and see your papa's bedroom. He's sleeping upstairs in yours, that everything may be done up afresh in his."

Molly could just remember, in faint clear lines of distinctness, the being taken into this very room to bid farewell to her dying mother. She could see the white linen, the white muslin, surrounding the pale, wan wistful face, with the large, longing eyes, yearning for one more touch of the little soft warm child, whom she was too feeble to clasp in her arms, already growing numb in death. Many a time when Molly had been in this room since that sad day, had she seen in vivid fancy that same wan wistful face lying on the pillow, the outline of the form beneath the clothes; and the girl had not shrunk from such visions, but rather cherished them, as preserving to her the remembrance of her mother's outward semblance. Her eyes were full of tears, as she followed Miss Browning into this room to see it under its new aspect. Nearly everything was changed—the position of the bed and the colour of the furniture; there was a grand toilette-table now, with a glass upon it, instead of the primitive substitute of the top of a chest of drawers, with a mirror above upon the wall, sloping downwards; these latter things had served her mother during her short married life.

"You see we must have all in order for a lady who has passed so much of her time in the countess's mansion," said Miss Browning, who was now quite reconciled to the marriage, thanks to the pleasant employment of furnishing that had devolved upon her in consequence. "Cromer, the upholsterer, wanted to persuade me to have a sofa and a writing-table. These men will say anything is the fashion, if they want to sell an article. I said, 'No, no, Cremer: bedrooms are for sleeping in, and sitting-rooms are for sitting in. Keep everything to its right purpose, and don't try and delude me into nonsense.' Why, my mother would have given us a fine scolding if she had ever caught us in our bedrooms in the daytime. We kept our out-door things in a closet downstairs; and there was a very tidy place for washing our hands, which is as much as one wants in the daytime. Stuffing up a bedroom with sofas and tables! I never heard of such a thing. Besides, a hundred pounds won't last for ever. I shan't be able to do anything for your room, Molly!"

"I'm right down glad of it," said Molly. "Nearly everything in it was what mamma had when she lived with my great-uncle. I wouldn't have had it changed for the world; I am so fond of it."

"Well, there's no danger of it, now the money is run out. By the way, Molly, who's to buy you a bridesmaid's dress?"

"I don't know," said Molly; "I suppose I am to be a bridesmaid; but no one has spoken to me about my dress."

"Then I shall ask your papa."

"Please, don't. He must have to spend a great deal of money just now. Besides, I would rather not be at the wedding, if they'll let me stay away."

"Nonsense, child. Why, all the town would be talking of it. You must go, and you must be well dressed, for your father's sake."

But Mr. Gibson had thought of Molly's dress, although he had said nothing about it to her. He had commissioned his future wife to get her what was requisite; and presently a very smart dressmaker came over from the county-town to try on a dress, which was both so simple and so elegant as at once to charm Molly. When it came home all ready to put on, Molly had a private dressing-up for the Miss Brownings' benefit; and she was almost startled when she looked into the glass, and saw the improvement in her appearance. "I wonder if I'm pretty," thought she. "I almost think I am—in this kind of dress I mean, of course. Betty would say, 'fine feathers make fine birds.'"

When she went downstairs in her bridal attire, and with shy blushes presented herself for inspection, she was greeted with a burst of admiration.

"Well, upon my word! I shouldn't have known you." ("Fine feathers," thought Molly, and checked her rising vanity.)

"You are really beautiful—isn't she, sister?" said Miss Phoebe. "Why, my dear, if you were always dressed, you would be prettier than your dear mamma, whom we always reckoned so very personable."

"You're not a bit like her. You favour your father, and white always sets off a brown complexion."

"But isn't she beautiful?" persevered Miss Phoebe.

"Well! and if she is, Providence made her, and not she herself. Besides, the dressmaker must go shares. What a fine India muslin it is! it'll have cost a pretty penny!"

Mr. Gibson and Molly drove over to Ashcombe, the night before the wedding, in the one yellow post-chaise that Hollingford possessed. They were to be Mr. Preston's, or, rather, my lord's, guests at the Manor-house. The Manor-house came up to its name, and delighted Molly at first sight. It was built of stone, had many gables and mullioned windows, and was covered over with Virginian creeper and late-blown roses. Molly did not know Mr. Preston, who stood in the doorway to greet her father. She took standing with him as a young lady at once, and it was the first time she had met with the kind of behaviour—half complimentary, half flirting—which some men think it necessary to assume with every woman under five-and-twenty. Mr. Preston was very handsome, and knew it. He was a fair man, with light-brown hair and whiskers; grey, roving, well-shaped eyes, with lashes darker than his hair; and a figure rendered easy and supple by the athletic exercises in which his excellence was famous, and which had procured him admission into much higher society than he was otherwise entitled to enter. He was a capital cricketer; was so good a shot, that any house desirous of reputation for its bags on the 12th or the 1st, was glad to have him for a guest. He taught young ladies to play billiards on a wet day, or went in for the game in serious earnest when required. He knew half the private theatrical plays off by heart, and was invaluable in arranging impromptu charades and tableaux. He had his own private reasons for wishing to get up a flirtation with Molly just at this

time; he had amused himself so much with the widow when she first came to Ashcombe, that he fancied that the sight of him, standing by her less polished, less handsome, middle-aged husband, might be too much of a contrast to be agreeable. Besides, he had really a strong passion for some one else; some one who would be absent; and that passion it was necessary for him to conceal. So that, altogether, he had resolved, even had "the little Gibson-girl" (as he called her) been less attractive than she was, to devote himself to her for the next sixteen hours.

They were taken by their host into a wainscoted parlour, where a wood fire crackled and burnt, and the crimson curtains shut out the wanning day and the outer chill. Here the table was laid for dinner; snowy table-linen, bright silver, clear sparkling glass, wine and an autumnal dessert on the sideboard. Yet Mr. Preston kept apologizing to Molly for the rudeness of his bachelor home, for the smallness of the room, the great dining-room being already appropriated by his housekeeper, in preparation for the morrow's breakfast. And then he rang for a servant to show Molly to her room. She was taken into a most comfortable chamber; a wood fire on the hearth, candles lighted on the toilette-table, dark woollen curtains surrounding a snow-white bed, great vases of china standing here and there.

"This is my Lady Harriet's room when her ladyship comes to the Manor-house with my lord the earl," said the housemaid, striking out thousands of brilliant sparks by a well-directed blow at a smouldering log. "Shall I help you to dress, miss? I always helps her ladyship."

Molly, quite aware of the fact that she had but her white muslin gown for the wedding besides that she had on, dismissed the good woman, and was thankful to be left to herself.

"Dinner" was it called? Why, it was nearly eight o'clock; and preparations for bed seemed a more natural employment than dressing at this hour of night. All the dressing she could manage was the placing of a red damask rose or two in the band of her grey stuff gown, there standing a great nosegay of choice autumnal flowers on the toilette-table. She did try the effect of another crimson rose in her black hair, just above her ear; it was very pretty, but too coquettish, and so she put it back again. The dark-oak panels and wainscoting of the whole house seemed to glow in warm light; there were so many fires in different rooms, in the hall, and even one on the landing of the staircase. Mr. Preston must have heard her step, for he met her in the hall, and led her into a small drawing-room, with close folding-doors on one side, opening into the larger drawing-room, as he told her. This room into which she entered reminded her a little of Hamley—yellow-satin upholstery of seventy or a hundred years ago, all delicately kept and scrupulously clean; great Indian cabinets, and china jars, emitting spicy odours; a large blazing fire, before which her father stood in his morning dress, grave and thoughtful, as he had been all day.

"This room is that which Lady Harriet uses when she comes here

with her father for a day or two," said Mr. Preston. And Molly tried to save her father by being ready to talk herself.

"Does she often come here?"

"Not often. But I fancy she likes being here when she does. Perhaps she finds it an agreeable change after the more formal life she leads at the Towers."

"I should think it was a very pleasant house to stay at," said Molly, remembering the look of warm comfort that pervaded it. But a little to her dismay Mr. Preston seemed to take it as a compliment to himself.

"I was afraid a young lady like you might perceive all the incongruities of a bachelor's home. I am very much obliged to you, Miss Gibson. In general I live pretty much in the room in which we shall dine; and I have a sort of agent's office in which I keep books and papers, and receive callers on business."

Then they went in to dinner. Molly thought everything that was served was delicious, and cooked to the point of perfection; but they did not seem to satisfy Mr. Preston, who apologized to his guests several times for the bad cooking of this dish, or the omission of a particular sauce to that; always referring to bachelor's housekeeping, bachelor's this and bachelor's that, till Molly grew quite impatient at the word. Her father's depression, which was still continuing and rendering him very silent, made her uneasy; yet she wished to conceal it from Mr. Preston; and so she talked away, trying to obviate the sort of personal bearing which their host would give to everything. She did not know when to leave the gentlemen, but her father made a sign to her; and she was conducted back to the yellow drawing-room by Mr. Preston, who made many apologies for leaving her there alone. She enjoyed herself extremely, however, feeling at liberty to prowl about, and examine all the curiosities the room contained. Among other things was a Louis Quinze cabinet with lovely miniatures in enamel let into the fine woodwork. She carried a candle to it, and was looking intently at these faces when her father and Mr. Preston came in. Her father looked still careworn and anxious; he came up and patted her on the back, looked at what she was looking at, and then went off to silence and the fire. Mr. Preston took the candle out of her hand, and threw himself into her interests with an air of ready gallantry.

"That is said to be Mademoiselle de St. Quentin, a great beauty at the French Court. This is Madame du Barri. Do you see any likeness in Mademoiselle de St. Quentin to any one you know?" He had lowered his voice a little as he asked this question.

"No!" said Molly, looking at it again. "I never saw any one half so beautiful."

"But don't you see a likeness—in the eyes particularly?" he asked again, with some impatience.

Molly tried hard to find out a resemblance, and was again unsuccessful.

"It constantly reminds me of—of Miss Kirkpatrick."

"Does it?" said Molly, eagerly. "Oh! I am so glad—I've never seen her, so of course I couldn't find out the likeness. You know her, then, do you? Please tell me all about her."

He hesitated a moment before speaking. He smiled a little before replying.

"She's very beautiful; that of course is understood when I say that this miniature does not come up to her for beauty."

"And besides?—Go on, please."

"What do you mean by 'besides'?"

"Oh! I suppose she's very clever and accomplished?"

That was not in the least what Molly wanted to ask; but it was difficult to word the vague vastness of her unspoken inquiry.

"She is clever naturally; she has picked up accomplishments. But she has such a charm about her, one forgets what she herself is in the halo that surrounds her. You ask me all this, Miss Gibson, and I answer truthfully; or else I should not entertain one young lady with my enthusiastic praises of another."

"I don't see why not," said Molly. "Besides, if you wouldn't do it in general, I think you ought to do it in my case; for you, perhaps, don't know, but she is coming to live with us when she leaves school, and we are very nearly the same age; so it will be almost like having a sister."

"She is to live with you, is she?" said Mr. Preston, to whom this intelligence was news. "And when is she to leave school? I thought she would surely have been at this wedding; but I was told she was not to come. When is she to leave school?"

"I think it is to be at Easter. You know she's at Boulogne, and it's a long journey for her to come alone; or else papa wished for her to be at the marriage very much indeed."

"And her mother prevented it?—I understand."

"No, it wasn't her mother; it was the French schoolmistress, who didn't think it desirable."

"It comes to pretty much the same thing. And she's to return and live with you after Easter?"

"I believe so. Is she a grave or a merry person?"

"Never very grave, as far as I have seen of her. Sparkling would be the word for her, I think. Do you ever write to her? If you do, pray remember me to her, and tell her how we have been talking about her—you and I."

"I never write to her," said Molly, rather shortly.

Tea came in; and after that they all went to bed. Molly heard her father exclaim at the fire in his bedroom, and Mr. Preston's reply—

"I pique myself on my keen relish for all creature comforts, and also on my power of doing without them, if need be. My lord's woods are ample, and I indulge myself with a fire in my bedroom for nine months in the year; yet I could travel in Iceland without wincing from the cold."

CHAPTER XIV.

MOLLY FINDS HERSELF PATRONIZED.

THE wedding went off much as such affairs do. Lord Cumnor and Lady Harriet drove over from the Towers, so the hour for the ceremony was as late as possible. Lord Cumnor came over to officiate as the bride's father, and was in more open glee than either bride or bridegroom, or any one else. Lady Harriet came as a sort of amateur bridesmaid, to "share Molly's duties," as she called it. They went from the Manor-house in two carriages to the church in the park, Mr. Presten and Mr. Gibson in one, and Molly, to her dismay, shut up with Lord Cumnor and Lady Harriet in the other. Lady Harriet's gown of white muslin had seen one or two garden-parties, and was not in the freshest order; it had been rather a freak of the young lady's at the last moment. She was very merry, and very much inclined to talk to Molly, by way of finding out what sort of a little personage Clare was to have for her future daughter. She began :

"We mustn't crush this pretty muslin dress of yours. Put it over papa's knee ; he doesn't mind it in the least."

"What, my dear, a white dress !—no, to be sure not. I rather like it. Besides, going to a wedding, who minds anything ? It would be different if we were going to a funeral."

Molly conscientiously strove to find out the meaning of this speech ; but before she had done so, Lady Harriet spoke again, going to the point, as she always piqued herself on doing :

"I daresay it's something of a trial to you, this second marriage of your father's ; but you'll find Clare the most amiable of women. She always let me have my own way, and I've no doubt she'll let you have yours."

"I mean to try and like her," said Molly, in a low voice, trying hard to keep down the tears that would keep rising to her eyes this morning. "I've seen very little of her yet."

"Why, it's the very best thing for you that could have happened, my dear," said Lord Cumnor. "You're growing up into a young lady—and a very pretty young lady, too, if you'll allow an old man to say so—and who so proper as your father's wife to bring you out, and show you off, and take you to balls, and that kind of thing ? I always said this match that is going to come off to-day was the most suitable thing I ever knew ; and it's even a better thing for you than for the people themselves."

"Poor child !" said Lady Harriet, who had caught a sight of Molly's troubled face, "the thought of balls is too much for her just now; but you'll like having Cynthia Kirkpatrick for a companion, sha'n't you, dear ?"

"Very much," said Molly, cheering up a little. "Do you know her ?"

"Oh, I've seen her over and over again when she was a little girl, and once or twice since. She's the prettiest creature that you ever saw; and with eyes that mean mischief, if I'm not mistaken. But Clare kept her spirit under pretty well when she was staying with us,—afraid of her being troublesome, I fancy."

Before Molly could shape her next question, they were at the church; and she and Lady Harriet went into a pew near the door to wait for the bride, in whose train they were to proceed to the altar. The earl drove on alone to fetch her from her own house, not a quarter of a mile distant. It was pleasant to her to be led to the hymeneal altar by a belted earl, and pleasant to have his daughter as a volunteer bridesmaid. Mrs. Kirkpatrick in this flush of small gratifications, and on the brink of matrimony with a man whom she liked, and who would be bound to support her without any exertion of her own, looked beamingly happy and handsome. A little cloud came over her face at the sight of Mr. Preston,—the sweet perpetuity of her smile was rather disturbed as he followed in Mr. Gibson's wake. But his face never changed; he bowed to her gravely, and then seemed absorbed in the service. Ten minutes, and all was over. The bride and bridegroom were driving tête-à-tête to the Manor-house, Mr. Preston was walking thither by a short cut, and Molly was again in the carriage with my lord, rubbing his hands and chuckling, and Lady Harriet, trying to be kind and consolatory, when her silence would have been the best comfort.

Molly found out, to her dismay, that the plan was for her to return with Lord Cumnor and Lady Harriet when they went back to the Towers in the evening. In the meantime Lord Cumnor had business to do with Mr. Preston, and after the happy couple had driven off on their week's holiday tour, she was to be left alone with the formidable Lady Harriet. When they were by themselves after all the others had been thus disposed of, Lady Harriet sate still over the drawing-room fire, holding a screen between it and her face, but gazing intently at Molly for a minute or two. Molly was fully conscious of this prolonged look, and was trying to get up her courage to return the stare, when Lady Harriet suddenly said,—

"I like you;—you are a little wild creature, and I want to tame you. Come here, and sit on this stool by me. What is your name? or what do they call you?—as North-country people would express it."

"Molly Gibson. My real name is Mary."

"Molly is a nice, soft-sounding name. People in the last century weren't afraid of homely names; now we are all so smart and fine: no more 'Lady Bettys' now. I almost wonder they haven't re-christened all the worsted and knitting-cotton that bears her name. Fancy Lady Constantia's cotton, or Lady Anna-Maria's worsted."

"I didn't know there was a Lady Betty's cotton," said Molly.

"That proves you don't do fancy-work! You'll find Clare will set you to it, though. She used to set me at piece after piece: knights

kneeling to ladies; impossible flowers. But I must do her the justice to add that when I got tired of them she finished them herself. I wonder how you'll get on together?"

"So do I!" sighed out Molly, under her breath.

"I used to think I managed her, till one day an uncomfortable suspicion arose that all the time she had been managing me. Still it's easy work to let oneself be managed; at any rate till one wakens up to the consciousness of the process, and then it may become amusing, if one takes it in that light."

"I should hate to be managed," said Molly, indignantly. "I'll try and do what she wishes for papa's sake, if she'll only tell me outright; but I should dislike to be trapped into anything."

"Now I," said Lady Harriet, "am too lazy to avoid traps; and I rather like to remark the cleverness with which they're set. But then of course I know that, if I choose to exert myself, I can break through the withes of green flax with which they try to bind me. Now, perhaps, you won't be able."

"I don't quite understand what you mean," said Molly.

"Oh, well—never mind; I daresay it's as well for you that you shouldn't. The moral of all I have been saying is, 'Be a good girl, and suffer yourself to be led, and you'll find your new stepmother the sweetest creature imaginable.' You'll get on capitally with her, I make no doubt. How you'll get on with her daughter is another affair; but I daresay very well. Now we'll ring for tea; for I suppose that heavy breakfast is to stand for our lunch."

Mr. Preston came into the room just at this time, and Molly was a little surprised at Lady Harriet's cool manner of dismissing him, remembering as she did how Mr. Preston had implied his intimacy with her ladyship the evening before at dinner-time.

"I cannot bear that sort of person," said Lady Harriet, almost before he was out of hearing; "giving himself airs of gallantry towards one to whom his simple respect is all his duty. I can talk to one of my father's labourers with pleasure, while with a man like that underbred fop I am all over thorns and nettles. What is it the Irish call that style of creature? They've some capital word for it, I know. What is it?"

"I don't know—I never heard it," said Molly, a little ashamed of her ignorance.

"Oh! that shows you've never read Miss Edgeworth's tales;—now, have you? If you had, you'd have recollect that there was such a word, even if you didn't remember what it was. If you've never read those stories, they would be just the thing to beguile your solitude—vastly improving and moral, and yet quite sufficiently interesting. I'll lend them to you while you're all alone."

"I'm not alone. I'm not at home, but on a visit to Miss Brownings."

"Then I'll bring them to you. I know the Miss Brownings; they used to come regularly on the school-day to the Towers. Pecksy and

Flapsy I used to call them. I like the Miss Brownings ; one gets enough of respect from them at any rate ; and I've always wanted to see the kind of *ménage* of such people. I'll bring you a whole pile of Miss Edgeworth's stories, my dear."

Molly sat quite silent for a minute or two; then she mustered up courage to speak out what was in her mind.

"Your ladyship" (the title was the firstfruits of the lesson, as Molly took it, on paying due respect)—"your ladyship keeps speaking of the sort of—the class of people to which I belong as if it was a kind of strange animal you were talking about ; yet you talk so openly to me that—"

"Well, go on—I like to hear you."

Still silence.

"You think me in your heart a little impertinent—now, don't you ?" said Lady Harriet, almost kindly.

Molly held her peace for two or three moments ; then she lifted her beautiful, honest eyes to Lady Harriet's face, and said,—

"Yes !—a little. But I think you a great many other things."

"We'll leave the 'other things' for the present. Don't you see, little one, I talk after my kind, just as you talk after your kind. It's only on the surface with both of us. Why, I daresay some of your good Hollingford ladies talk of the poor people in a manner which they would consider as impertinent in their turn, if they could hear it. But I ought to be more considerate when I remember how often my blood has boiled at the modes of speech and behaviour of one of my aunts, mamma's sister, Lady—No ! I won't name names. Any one who earns his livelihood by any exercise of head or hands, from professional people and rich merchants down to labourers, she calls 'persons.' She would never in her most slip-slop talk accord them even the conventional title of 'gentlemen ;' and the way in which she takes possession of human beings, 'my woman,' 'my people,'—but, after all, it is only a way of speaking. I ought not to have used it to you ; but somehow I separate you from all these Hollingford people."

"But why ?" persevered Molly. "I'm one of them."

"Yes, you are. But—now don't reprove me again for impertinence—most of them are so unnatural in their exaggerated respect and admiration when they come up to the Towers, and put on so much pretence by way of fine manners, that they only make themselves objects of ridicule. You at least are simple and truthful, and that's why I separate you in my own mind from them, and have talked unconsciously to you as I would—Well ! now here's another piece of impertinence—as I would to my equal—in rank, I mean ; for I don't set myself up in solid things as any better than my neighbours. Here's tea, however, come in time to stop me from growing too humble."

It was a very pleasant little tea in the fading September twilight. Just as it was ended, in came Mr. Preston again.

"Lady Harriet, will you allow me the pleasure of showing you some alterations I have made in the flower-garden—in which I have tried to consult your taste—before it grows dark?"

"Thank you, Mr. Preston. I will ride over with papa some day, and we will see if we approve of them."

Mr. Preston's brow flushed. But he affected not to perceive Lady Harriet's haughtiness, and, turning to Molly, he said,—

"Will not you come out, Miss Gibson, and see something of the gardens? You haven't been out at all, I think, excepting to church."

Molly did not like the idea of going out for a tête-à-tête walk with Mr. Preston; yet she pined for a little fresh air, would have liked to have seen the gardens, and have looked at the Manor-house from different aspects; and, besides this, much as she recoiled from Mr. Preston, she felt sorry for him under the repulse he had just received. While she was hesitating, and slowly tending towards consent, Lady Harriet spoke,—

"I cannot spare Miss Gibson. If she would like to see the place, I will bring her over some day myself."

When he had left the room, Lady Harriet said,—

"I daresay it's my own lazy selfishness has kept you indoors all day against your will. But, at any rate, you are not to go out walking with that man. I've an instinctive aversion to him; not entirely instinctive either; it has some foundation in fact; and I desire you don't allow him ever to get intimate with you. He's a very clever land-agent, and does his duty by papa, and I don't choose to be taken up for libel; but remember what I say!"

Then the carriage came round, and after numberless last words from the earl—who appeared to have put off every possible direction to the moment when he stood, like an awkward Mercury, balancing himself on the step of the carriage—they drove back to the Towers.

"Would you rather come in and dine with us—we should send you home, of course—or go home straight?" asked Lady Harriet of Molly. She and her father had both been sleeping till they drew up at the bottom of the flight of steps.

"Tell the truth, now and evermore. Truth is generally amusing, if it's nothing else!"

"I would rather go back to Miss Brownings' at once, please," said Molly, with a nightmare-like recollection of the last, the only evening she had spent at the Towers.

Lord Cumnor was standing on the steps, waiting to hand his daughter out of the carriage. Lady Harriet stopped to kiss Molly on the forehead, and to say,—

"I shall come some day soon, and bring you a load of Miss Edgeworth's tales, and make further acquaintance with Pecksy and Flapsy."

"No, don't, please," said Molly, taking hold of her, to detain her. "You must not come—indeed you must not."

"Why not?"

"Because I would rather not—because I think that I ought not to have any one coming to see me who laughs at the friends I am staying with, and calls them names." Molly's heart beat very fast, but she meant every word that she said.

"My dear little woman!" said Lady Harriet, bending over her and speaking quite gravely. "I'm very sorry to have called them names—very, very sorry to have hurt you. If I promise you to be respectful to them in word and in deed—and in very thought, if I can—you'll let me then, won't you?"

Molly hesitated. "I'd better go home at once; I shall only say wrong things—and there's Lord Cumnor waiting all this time."

"Let him alone; he's very well amused hearing all the news of the day from Brown. Then I shall come—under promise?"

So Molly drove off in solitary grandeur; and Miss Brownings' knocker was loosened on its venerable hinges by the never-ending peal of Lord Cumnor's footman.

They were full of welcome, full of curiosity. All through the long day they had been missing their bright young visitor, and three or four times in every hour they had been wondering and settling what everybody was doing at that exact minute. What had become of Molly during all the afternoon, had been a great perplexity to them; and they were very much oppressed with a sense of the great honour she had received in being allowed to spend so many hours tête-à-tête with Lady Harriet. They were, indeed, more excited by this one fact than by all the details of the wedding, most of which they had known of beforehand, and talked over with much perseverance during the day. Molly began to feel as if there was some foundation for Lady Harriet's inclination to ridicule the worship paid by the good people of Hollingsford to their liege lords, and to wonder with what tokens of reverence they would receive Lady Harriet if she came to pay her promised visit. She had never thought of concealing the probability of this call until this evening; but now she felt as if it would be better not to speak of the chance, as she was not at all sure if the promise would be fulfilled.

Before Lady Harriet's call was paid, Molly received another visit. Roger Hamley came riding over one day with a note from his mother, and a wasp's-nest as a present from himself. Molly heard his powerful voice come sounding up the little staircase, as he asked if Miss Gibson was at home from the servant-maid at the door; and she was half amused and half annoyed as she thought how this call of his would give colour to Miss Brownings's fancies. "I would rather never be married at all," thought she, "than marry an ugly man,—and dear good Mr. Roger is really ugly; I don't think one could even call him plain." Yet Miss Brownings, who did not look upon young men as if their natural costume was a helmet and a suit of armour, thought Mr. Roger Hamley a very personable young fellow, as he came into the room, his face flushed with

exercise, his white teeth showing pleasantly in the courteous bow and smile he gave to all around. He knew the Miss Brownings slightly, and talked pleasantly to them while Molly read Mrs. Hamley's little missive of sympathy and good wishes relating to the wedding; then he turned to her, and though Miss Brownings listened with all their ears, they could not find out anything remarkable either in the words he said or the tone in which they were spoken.

"I've brought you the wasps'-nest I promised you, Miss Gibson. There has been no lack of such things this year; we've taken seventy-four on my father's land alone; and one of the labourers, a poor fellow who ekes out his wages by bee-keeping, has had a sad misfortune—the wasps have turned the bees out of his seven hives, taken possession, and eaten up the honey."

"What greedy little vermin!" said Miss Browning.

Molly saw Roger's eyes twinkle at the misapplication of the word; but though he had a strong sense of humour, it never appeared to diminish his respect for the people who amused him.

"I'm sure they deserve fire and brimstone more than the poor dear innocent bees," said Miss Phoebe. "And then it seems so ungrateful of mankind, who are going to feast on the honey!" She sighed over the thought, as if it was too much for her.

While Molly finished reading her note, he explained its contents to Miss Browning.

"My brother and I are going with my father to an agricultural meeting at Canonbury on Thursday, and my mother desired me to say to you how very much obliged to you she should be if you would spare her Miss Gibson for the day. She was very anxious to ask for the pleasure of your company, too, but she really is so poorly that we persuaded her to be content with Miss Gibson, as she wouldn't scruple leaving a young lady to amuse herself, which she would be unwilling to do if you and your sister were there."

"I'm sure she's very kind; very. Nothing would have given us more pleasure," said Miss Browning, drawing herself up in gratified dignity. "Oh, yes, we quite understand, Mr. Roger; and we fully recognize Mrs. Hamley's kind intention. We will take the will for the deed, as the common people express it. I believe that there was an intermarriage between the Brownings and the Hamleys, a generation or two ago."

"I daresay there was," said Roger. "My mother is very delicate, and obliged to humour her health, which has made her keep aloof from society."

"Then I may go?" said Molly, sparkling with the idea of seeing her dear Mrs. Hamley again, yet afraid of appearing too desirous of leaving her kind old friends.

"To be sure, my dear. Write a pretty note, and tell Mrs. Hamley how much obliged to her we are for thinking of us."

"I'm afraid I can't wait for a note," said Roger. "I must take a message instead, for I have to meet my father at one o'clock, and it's close upon it now."

When he was gone, Molly felt so light-hearted at the thoughts of Thursday that she could hardly attend to what the Miss Brownings were saying. One was talking about the pretty muslin gown which Molly had sent to the wash only that morning, and contriving how it could be had back again in time for Molly to wear; and the other, Miss Phebe, totally inattentive to her sister's speaking for a wonder, was piping out a separate strain of her own, and singing Roger Hamley's praises.

"Such a fine-looking young man, and so courteous and affable. Like the young men of our youth now, is he not, sister? And yet they all say Mr. Osborne is the handsomest. What do you think, child?"

"I've never seen Mr. Osborne," said Molly, blushing, and hating herself for doing so. Why was it? She had never seen him as she said. It was only that her fancy had dwelt on him so much.

He was gone; all the gentlemen were gone before the carriage, which came to fetch Molly on Thursday, reached Hamley Hall. But Molly was almost glad, she was so much afraid of being disappointed. Besides, she had her dear Mrs. Hamley the more to herself; the quiet sit in the morning-room, talking poetry and romance; the mid-day saunter into the garden, brilliant with autumnal flowers and glittering dew-drops on the gossamer webs that stretched from scarlet to blue, and thence to purple and yellow petals. As they were sitting at lunch, a strange man's voice and step were heard in the hall; the door was opened, and a young man came in, who could be no other than Osborne. He was beautiful and languid-looking, almost as frail in appearance as his mother, whom he strongly resembled. This seeming delicacy made him appear older than he was. He was dressed to perfection, and yet with easy carelessness. He came up to his mother, and stood by her, holding her hand, while his eyes sought Molly, not boldly or impertinently, but as if appraising her critically.

"Yes! I'm back again. Bullocks, I find, are not in my line. I only disappointed my father in not being able to appreciate their merits, and, I'm afraid, I didn't care to learn. And the smell was insufferable on such a hot day."

"My dear boy, don't make apologies to me; keep them for your father. I'm only too glad to have you back. Miss Gibson, this tall fellow is my son Osborne, as I daresay you have guessed. Osborne—Miss Gibson. Now, what will you have?"

He looked round the table as he sate down. "Nothing here," said he. "Is there not some cold game-pie? I'll ring for that."

Molly was trying to reconcile the ideal with the real. The ideal was agile, yet powerful, with Greek features and an eagle-eye, capable of enduring long fasting, and indifferent as to what he ate. The real was almost effeminate in movement, though not in figure; he had the Greek

features, but his blue eyes had a cold, weary expression in them. He was dainty in eating, and had anything but a Homeric appetite. However, Molly's hero was not to eat more than Ivanhoe, when he was Friar Tuck's guest; and, after all, with a little alteration, she began to think Mr. Osborne Hamley might turn out a poetical, if not a chivalrous hero. He was extremely attentive to his mother, which pleased Molly, and, in return, Mrs. Hamley seemed charmed with him to such a degree that Molly once or twice fancied that mother and son would have been happier in her absence. Yet, again, it struck on the shrewd, if simple girl, that Osborne was mentally squinting at her in the conversation which was directed to his mother. There were little turns and 'fioriture' of speech which Molly could not help feeling were graceful antics of language not common in the simple daily intercourse between mother and son. But it was flattering rather than otherwise to perceive that a very fine young man, who was a poet to boot, should think it worth while to talk on the tight rope for her benefit. And before the afternoon was ended, without there having been any direct conversation between Osborne and Molly, she had reinstated him on his throne in her imagination; indeed, she had almost felt herself disloyal to her dear Mrs. Hamley when, in the first hour after her introduction, she had questioned his claims on his mother's idolatry. His beauty came out more and more, as he became animated in some discussion with her; and all his attitudes, if a little studied, were graceful in the extreme. Before Molly left, the squire and Roger returned from Canonbury.

"Osborne here!" said the squire, red and panting. "Why the deuce couldn't you tell us you were coming home? I looked about for you everywhere, just as we were going into the ordinary. I wanted to introduce you to Grantley, and Fox, and Lord Forrest—men from the other side of the county, whom you ought to know; and Roger there missed above half his dinner hunting about for you; and all the time you'd stole away, and were quietly sitting here with the women. I wish you'd let me know the next time you make off. I've lost half my pleasure in looking at as fine a lot of cattle as I ever saw, with thinking you might be having one of your old attacks of faintness."

"I should have had one, I think, if I'd stayed longer in that atmosphere. But I'm sorry if I've caused you anxiety."

"Well! well!" said the squire, somewhat mollified. "And Roger, too,—there I've been sending him here and sending him there all the afternoon."

"I didn't mind it, sir. I was only sorry you were so uneasy. I thought Osborne had gone home, for I knew it wasn't much in his way," said Roger.

Molly intercepted a glance between the two brothers—a look of true confidence and love, which suddenly made her like them both under the aspect of relationship—new to her observation.

Roger came up to her, and sat down by her.

" Well, and how are you getting on with Huber; don't you find him very interesting ? "

" I'm afraid," said Molly, penitently, " I haven't read much. Miss Brownings like me to talk; and, besides, there is so much to do at home before papa comes back; and Miss Browning doesn't like me to go without her. I know it sounds nothing, but it does take up a great deal of time."

" When is your father coming back ? "

" Next Tuesday, I believe. He cannot stay long away."

" I shall ride over and pay my respects to Mrs. Gibson," said he. " I shall come as soon as I may. Your father has been a very kind friend to me ever since I was a boy. And when I come, I shall expect my pupil to have been very diligent," he concluded, smiling his kind, pleasant smile at idle Molly.

Then the carriage came round, and she had the long solitary drive back to Miss Brownings'. It was dark out of doors when she got there; but Miss Phoebe was standing on the stairs, with a lighted candle in her hand, peering into the darkness to see Molly come in.

" Oh, Molly ! I thought you'd never come back. Such a piece of news ! Sister has gone to bed; she's had a headache—with the excitement, I think; but she says it's new bread. Come upstairs softly, my dear, and I'll tell you what it is ! Who do you think has been here,—drinking tea with us, too, in the most condescending manner ? "

" Lady Harriet ? " said Molly, suddenly enlightened by the word 'condescending.'

" Yes. Why, how did you guess it ? But, after all, her call, at any rate in the first instance, was upon you. Oh, dear, Molly ! if you're not in a hurry to go to bed, let me sit down quietly and tell you all about it; for my heart jumps into my mouth still when I think of how I was caught. She—that is, her ladyship—left the carriage at 'The George,' and took to her feet to go shopping—just as you or I may have done many a time in our lives. And sister was taking her forty winks; and I was sitting with my gown up above my knees and my feet on the fender, pulling out my grandmother's lace which I'd been washing. The worst has yet to be told. I'd taken off my cap, for I thought it was getting dusk and no one would come, and there was I in my black silk skull-cap, when Nancy put her head in, and whispered, ' There's a lady downstairs—a real grand one, by her talk ; ' and in there came my Lady Harriet, so sweet and pretty in her ways, it was some time before I forgot I had never a cap on. Sister never wakened; or never roused up, so to say. She says she thought it was Nancy bringing in the tea when she heard some one moving; for her ladyship, as soon as she saw the state of the case, came and knelt down on the rug by me, and begged my pardon so prettily for having followed Nancy upstairs without waiting for permission; and was so taken by my old lace, and wanted to know how I washed it, and where you were, and when you'd be back, and when the happy couple

would be back : till sister wakened—she's always a little bit put out, you know, when she first wakens from her afternoon nap,—and, without turning her head to see who it was, she said, quite sharp,—‘ Buzz, buzz, buzz ! When will you learn that whispering is more fidgeting than talking out loud ? I've not been able to sleep at all for the chatter you and Nancy have been keeping up all this time.’ You know that was a little fancy of sister's, for she'd been snoring away as naturally as could be. So I went to her, and leant over her, and said, in a low voice,—

“ ‘ Sister, it's her ladyship and me that has been conversing.’

“ ‘ Ladyship here, ladyship there ! have you lost your wits, Phœbe, that you talk such nonsense—and in your skull-cap, too ! ’

“ By this time she was sitting up, and, looking round her, she saw Lady Harriet, in her velvets and silks, sitting on our rug, smiling, her bonnet off, and her pretty hair all bright with the blaze of the fire. My word ! Sister was up on her feet directly ; and she dropped her curtsey, and made her excuses for sleeping, as fast as might be, while I went off to put on my best cap, for sister might well say I was out of my wits to go on chatting to an earl's daughter in an old black silk skull-cap. Black silk, too ! when, if I'd only known she was coming, I might have put on my new brown silk, lying idle in my top drawer. And when I came back, sister was ordering tea for her ladyship,—our tea, I mean. So I took my turn at talk, and sister slipped out to put on her Sunday silk. But I don't think we were quite so much at our ease with her ladyship as when I sat pulling out my lace in my skull-cap. And she was quite struck with our tea, and asked where we got it, for she had never tasted any like it before ; and I told her we gave only 3s. 4d. a pound for it, at Johnson's—(sister says I ought to have told her the price of our company-tea, which is 5s. a pound, only that was not what we were drinking ; for, as ill-luck would have it, we'd none of it in the house)—and she said she would send us some of hers, all the way from Russia or Prussia, or some out-of-the-way place, and we were to compare and see which we liked best ; and if we liked hers best, she could get it for us at 3s. a pound. And she left her love for you ; and, though she was going away, you were not to forget her. Sister thought such a message would set you up too much, and told me she would not be chargeable for the giving it you. ‘ But,’ I said, ‘ a message is a message, and it's on Molly's own shoulders if she's set up by it. Let us show her an example of humility, sister, though we have been sitting check-by-jowl in such company.’ So sister humped, and said she'd a headache, and went to bed. And now you may tell me your news, my dear.”

So Molly told her small events ; which, interesting as they might have been at other times to the gossip-loving and sympathetic Miss Phœbe, were rather pale in the stronger light reflected from the visit of an earl's daughter.

A Convict's Views of Penal Discipline.

[A man who has had an unfortunate experience of life in English prisons, and in the penal settlements of Australia, has written some remarks on our present methods of dealing with convicted criminals. From his MS. we take the following extract : believing that there is much in it which deserves attention.—Ed. C. M.]

ONE of the first things required is classification. Offenders against the law belong, some of them, to what is called the dangerous class, and are thieves by education and profession. Some of them belong to the so-called respectable class, and are either not thieves at all, or have committed some act of theft or fraud under strong temptation. And if our object be really what it is professedly, viz. the reformation of the criminal and the protection of society, the treatment required in the one case is very different from that which is called for in the other. From the majority of those who, up to the time of their conviction, have lived on the whole reputably, society has little to apprehend. Attach such a punishment to their offence as, while it is fair and just in itself, shall be sufficiently severe to serve as an example to others, and there is little danger of their transgressing a second time. Apply to them the system at present in operation in our Model Prisons. Keep them separate from each other—bring them in contact with one or two men superior to themselves—men of healthful vigorous minds, accustomed to deal with persons in their position, as the governor, chaplain, scripture-readers, &c.; give them books, keep them employed on some branch of trade that may be useful to them on their release; follow out, in short, the plan pursued at Pentonville and other prisons of the same kind, and nineteen out of twenty of the class of which we are speaking will, for the rest of their lives, be useful members of society.

The only thing you have to guard against, is keeping them in prison too long. Long imprisonments defeat their own end. In the first place, after a time, they lose their power to pain ; so all-powerful is use, that probably no system could be devised, short of one involving the most revolting cruelty, which would not come after a while to be borne with indifference. Thus, there is scarcely a prisoner to whom the routine and confinement of prison life continue to be a source of anything like acute suffering after the first year, or whom the close of the second year does not find callous and comfortable. All would prefer being at large—some for love of wife or child, left in the hard world outside, all for love of personal independence. But few feel much ; those who feel at all are touched through their affections ; and it is hard to cause any but the finer

and more highly educated natures much suffering even through these. The same relief comes to them which seems to come to all in great and irremediable trouble. Satisfied, after a time, that what is cannot be helped, that no anxiety on their part can undo the past or affect the future, they put aside all thought both of past and future, and live only for the present, making the best of everything. There is a bitter drop at the bottom of the cup, but they rarely drink down to it. There is a skeleton in the chamber, but they keep the door locked, and rarely pass that way; and fed, clothed, lodged, without need of care on their part, they come to lead the life of children—little children. This power of living for the present seems to be possessed by all alike. It is by no means confined to the class of which I am now speaking. The dark, morose, sullen ruffian, and the conscience-stricken melancholy criminal, who is the convict of our imagination, has no existence in reality, or is to be found only during the first few months after conviction. On the contrary, such unvaried cheerfulness, such general forbearance, such a power of taking everything pleasantly, as animates, almost without exception, those who have been long in confinement, is not perhaps to be met with in any other social circle in the world. Look into the exercise-grounds at Fremantle, and you will say that no party of pleasure was ever apparently so free from disturbing influences, or displayed so great an amount of tranquil enjoyment as the denounced and exiled men before you. And so completely is this the result of other causes than light punishment, that those undergoing the additional and terribly severe sentences for attempting to escape, and other prison offences, are as careless and happy as the rest. Loaded, many of them, with 28lb. irons day and night, condemned to wear them for one to three years; placed, some of them so loaded, on 1lb. of bread a day for sixty or seventy days at a time; and presenting, after such fasts, such a spectacle of emaciation that, if they were to appear (just as they are) in the streets of London, they would raise a general burst of indignation—they yet defy it all. Their punishment is very painful at first, and sufficiently painful all along to make them feel very savage and *quietly* cherish a future revenge. But after the first fourteen days, which they say is worse than all the rest, they suffer no acute pain. Borne up by the elasticity of youth,—strong in their motto, “I can do it,” and becoming better able, mentally if not physically, to bear their sufferings every successive day,—they grow as indifferent to their additional sentence as they did to their original one. In boisterous mirth they exceed, perhaps, any other class.

This sounds strange, but, when we come to think of it, it is all quite natural, all in accordance with a well-known and invariable law of nature for the protection of man against himself, and it is a fact which may be seen any day. But not only are long punishments unadvisable on account of their losing their effect and ceasing after a time to occasion either suffering or terror, and as being a hardening process,—but they are mischievous in not unfrequently snapping the great ties which bind us to others and

soften our nature. Detain men so long in prison that the little they have in the world has vanished—that the wife has been unable to keep things together—that the children have been scattered or ruined—and you have probably set influences to work which would defeat any prison system, however ably carried out. Probably you have made dangerous men even of those who would have otherwise gone out wholly reformed, but who will now, in the bitterness of their feelings, enter into society as into the ranks of a hated enemy, determined to take full amends for the injury that has been inflicted on them. On the other hand, treat this class of prisoners, this class of working respectable men, with moderation and judgment, their reformation is secured. Only recognize the fact that short punishments are more impressive than long ones, and that mere conviction is a thing dreadful to the man who is living reputably. The first few months of imprisonment is to men of this class terrible, while at the same time, if enforced in a model prison, it abounds with healthful reforming influences, forcing on those subject to it self-reflection, leading them to see their past fault and their true path ; and, what is not a small point with heart-sore men, the humane care shown by society in their punishment. And, if sent back into the world after a moderate dose of such discipline, if released by their brother man, before nature comes to their relief and makes their hard bed comparatively smooth and comfortable, they are men saved to themselves and others. They are not men who are in love with dishonesty ; they have fallen under some strong temptation—often by what seems an infatuation—but the life which they most prize at heart, and to which they have been accustomed, is one of honourable exertion, and if treated judiciously, to that life they will assuredly return and adhere.

How best to deal with the other class—that of professional thieves—is a very different affair. Their reformation, if they are released in England, seems almost impossible. Just consider the position of one of these men on leaving prison, what modes of life present themselves to him ? Two—regular employment, which, hateful in itself, promises the most galling annoyances, coupled with returns quite inadequate to his wants ; and his old loved familiar employment of skilled theft, which presents to him a picture of easy circumstances, unrestrained self-indulgence, and pleasant approving companionship. And will this man, the very curse of whose life is, that he has never restrained himself in the least thing from his childhood—the whole habit of whose life is the weakest self-indulgence—choose what is difficult and hateful, and unremunerative, when he can obtain what is in his idea the most enjoyable life, by a few successful strokes in a game in which defeat is so rare with him as to be hardly worth a thought ? It cannot be expected.

His only chance lies in his having been kept in separate confinement during the whole term of his imprisonment. There is then just a chance of his turning out respectable. The effect of the system in well-managed model prisons is undoubtedly most beneficent. I firmly believe that

almost all prisoners of every class become completely resolved, while they are under it, to live for the future honestly and reputably. And this is the opinion of every prisoner whom I have heard speak on the subject. I have heard many conversations on this point. One which I heard when I was in England took place between five professionals. Two questions were raised—first, whether it was possible to reform one of their class; and, secondly, supposing it possible, what was the system to effect it? The conclusion to which they unanimously came was, that such reformation was not possible, but that if anything could bring it about, it was the system pursued at such prisons as Pentonville. They agreed that "a man in separates could not help being religious and making good resolutions." The conclusion arrived at in this remarkable discussion I have been led, by a very wide field of observation, to regard as correct—*i. e.* if we take into account existing systems only. The separate system is beyond question powerful for good—most powerful, as far as it goes. Unfortunately, the reaction on coming out into the stir of life is so great, the temptations to the old course so strong, and the entering on a new course attended with so many difficulties and discouragements, that even if these unhappy men were sent straight from this sphere of good influences into a world of mixed good and evil, with their good resolutions fresh upon them, and with the power of seeking refuge against themselves and their old associates in the companionship of some respectable relative, or, if married, in that of wife and children, instead of being plunged, as they are, into that hot-bed of unmixed evil, "our public works," they would still, it is to be feared, be drawn into the old course. The separate system may be worth trying, especially as it has never yet been tried fairly, all its good effects having been completely annihilated by the system which has followed it—a system by which all the worst characters are brought from all parts, with full liberty to corrupt each other, and with power to do little else. But mark: if it fail once, never try it again, with the same men.

It is only the quack—the man who has but one medicine for all diseases—who, if one dose will not do, simply increases the quantity. If the patient is not cured by a reasonable application of one system, it only remains to try another. Mere fear—would that people would recognize this truth!—mere fear of a heavier punishment, in the event of a second conviction, has no influence in deterring the professional thief from the perpetration of any particular robbery, for the simple reason that before committing it he takes, as he believes, sufficient precautions to secure himself from capture or detection. The fact of his having once or twice during a long and successful career been foiled and punished may make him more careful, or, more properly speaking, less reckless, less carried away by over-confidence in his skill and luck; or, again, the heavier penalties attached to particular crimes may lead some to adopt a humbler line. But, his line once taken, the penalty to be suffered on detection he will not weigh for an instant. He as little stops to ask if the punishment

be transportation or death, as he does to ask if it is a week or a month. What he looks at is, not the penalty of the law, but the activity of the police. He leaves off garotting, not because of the Act of 1863, but because so much public attention has been called to it; just as he studiously avoids committing murder, not because the penalty is death, but because the police will be more active in pursuit; because, in short, he knows that twenty burglars escape for one murderer. He may, as he grows older, if he has sufficient self-restraint to amass capital enough to set up in business, retire from the more active line of the profession, because he well knows that either for his own crime or that of others he is sure to suffer in the long run; but in the meantime he pays no regard to increased penalties for one offence or another. He simply calculates the chances of success, and acts on his calculation without looking beyond. Mere accumulation of penalties is therefore idle; and with the skilled town thief, with London at his feet, you must trust for success to moral influences alone.

But if there is no hope for such men if released at home, is there if they are sent abroad? Under the present system none. Nine-tenths of the professional thieves will as certainly make their way, when their time is done, either to the South, or the States, or England, as they would go back to their old haunts, if released from public works at home. There is only one sort of life from which they have ever found any enjoyment—only one sort of life in which they believe, and to that life they will assuredly return. Their captivity has modified their views in one respect only. They have resolved to give up thieving as a permanent occupation. They intend to "do just one job, enough to bring 500*l.* or 1,000*l.*, and retire." How far this proposed limitation of operations may be consoling or not to the good people at home, it may be difficult to say; but such is the purpose of the great body of professionals at present in Australia. As to reformation?—In a system where all the worst characters are brought into close association, it is preposterous. Reformation in such association is out of the question: corruption is the right word. Association ruins even those well-meant and really plausible undertakings, youthful reformatories, well known here to be the nurseries of the most skilled and daring thieves in the profession. Much more does it tell here. Each strengthens the other in wickedness. Each is made more determined and accomplished for evil, and more hardened against good by the terrible knowledge and audacity on every side of him. To think to counteract the tremendous power of such a system for evil, by the previous discipline in "separates," or by throwing into the whirlpool prisoners of a different class, or by any of those religious influences that operate on persons living in mixed society—is to ignore human nature.

These men no sooner come down from "separates" to "public works," than their old instincts return on them with all their original strength, and their good resolutions are absolutely forgotten—as if they had never been made. The sight of their old companions, the stirring scenes they have to hear and to relate, the memories of their old life,

occupy them wholly, and every day is spent in mutual instruction in all sorts of iniquity. Their education is finished and made complete in the transport ship and the penal settlement; and every professional thief is by the end of his time in perfect training, accomplished in the highest degree, and quite ready to return to his old life and do his one job!

As regards the colony of Western Australia, that is an impossibility for the convict in every way. It has unfortunately been rendered peculiarly hateful to him. Forced to work, except in a few instances, for miserably poor wages—mostly paid in kind—allotted to particular districts, and forced to seek a livelihood in the manner and place which the magistrates think best for the convenience of the colonists—harassed by intricate police regulations—oppressed by his master—at the mercy of any free man—his oath valueless—his liberty depending on the arbitrary will of an individual holding no better position than did the Saxon serf under his Norman master—his only home the public-house and the brothel (the only two resources to which he has unlimited access)—he detests alike colony and colonist, the country and the people. He has no present and believes in no future here; were it not that he is tranquillized by the expectation of his conditional pardon, he would leave directly he is “on his ticket.” Great as are the physical obstacles of a land journey to the South, there are none but what might be overcome by resolute men proceeding in organized bodies. The journey is impossible only to individuals. And were it not for the hope of early conditional pardons, I have no hesitation in saying, that there are not five hundred out of the whole seven thousand prisoners who have received their tickets-of-leave, who would by this time be in the colony. The South is undoubtedly open—men do not go there now. It is not a necessity to them, is not regarded as so desirable as several other places, and they wait for their “conditional” to go elsewhere. But were it not for this, they would go southwards to a man. You look at them, you see them cheerful, and you judge them contented; but deceive not yourself—they are only contented “to wait.” Their hearts are in the old town life; hard and fast country life, as they have experienced it, is insupportable; and for all their superficial carelessness and indifference, they are no triflers. They have settled it with themselves that it is best to stay ~~such~~ a period as will obtain them a conditional, and in the meantime they make up their minds to think no more of their disagreeable position, but enjoy themselves as they can; but, if the period of their detention were longer, they would never accept it as endurable, but would migrate at once; and you would see them in another place of their character. But, indeed, it seems hardly likely that they could remain here ultimately, even were they so disposed. Even those convicts who belong to a different class and would gladly settle here, feel compelled to give up the idea; I mean those who depend for support on their daily labour and cannot settle as farmers or cotters.

The prosperity of the labouring class—even such poor prosperity as it

enjoys—is at an end. Its present prosperity is wholly artificial, dependent on the expenditure of the Government convict establishment. Western Australia possesses neither the advantage necessary to the success of agricultural colonists, nor, as far as is known, that harvest of gold which in other colonies has acted with all the force of accumulated capital. Ordinary colonists—seldom wealthy men—imperatively need good land, navigable rivers, and safe harbours. Western Australia is singularly deficient in all these respects. The navigable streams in a coast line of a thousand miles are only two, and these only navigable for a few miles, and for small rivers' craft; safe harbours it has none; and good land is only found in widely-scattered patches, chiefly at a distance from the coast. Consequently it was soon seen to be only fitted for stock farming, the produce of which—wool, hides, tallow, and horses—could, of course, be got to (a foreign) market with tolerable facility. For other produce there was virtually no market. The same agriculturist and cottager could live on the produce of the soil, and could, at a great disadvantage, exchange some of it with the storekeeper on the coast for some necessary foreign productions, but they could make no money. In this state of things—the English Government with a large convict establishment, full of wants, and paying cash for everything—the first ship-load of convicts and officials at once created a market for all the surplus produce within easy distance; and succeeding ship-loads, and continually extending wants and operations, have successively found employment for the continually extending labour-market. But though this has given a certain impetus to the colony, and raised up a class of traders and professional men, it has failed to greatly extend the breadth of land under cultivation, or to sensibly develop the resources of the country. Government has spared no pains to encourage the colonists to cultivation; it has provided them with labourers at fifteen shillings a month; and, if it could find half a dozen farm-houses in any direction—east, north, or south—it has made roads to them, though hundreds of miles distant from the coast and from each other. But long distances are impediments to cheap carriage even on macadamized roads; and flour can still be brought from Adelaide at less cost than from York and the growing districts in the colony; and the home farmers bring little or no corn to market. The large sheep and cattle breeders have found a market for an insignificant amount of their beef and mutton, and a number of cottagers have found an outlet for the produce on their two or three acres under the spade. But the labour-employed power of the colony has advanced but little for all its nursing. The population on the coast depends almost entirely on imported produce. Where, then, is the demand for bond labour? In the Government expenditure alone, or nearly so. On that depend, directly or indirectly, almost the whole six or seven thousand labourers brought to the colony as convicts. The English Government, besides relieving the colony of a great many burdens in the way of road-making, &c., actually spends in the salaries of its servants and in food some hundred thousand a year;

and this sum gives rise to a class of contractors and traders who employ an amount of labour equal to all the bond population in the colony, excepting only some fifteen hundred men employed directly by the convict establishment, consisting of prisoners and ticket-of-leave men who can find no work. But that the Government at home should go on accumulating labour in a country where there is no corresponding independent capital, and when it must itself find employment for the labour it imports, is out of the question.

Such a system may go on for a time, but it has its limits, and as the adult male bond population already trebles the adult male free population—a disproportion which cannot wisely be increased on social grounds—and as the ticket men out of employ average from three hundred to five hundred, taking the year round, that limit must soon be reached. But remove the establishment, and there is not employment for more than the free labouring population. Of the two thousand families who constitute the entire free population of Western Australia, those residing in the so-called towns, consisting of traders and others dependent for their market on the establishment and its officials, will vanish with the establishment itself. Their market gone, they will go. This exodus will take away fully one-half of the free population, and just that half which employs labour: what prospect is there, then, for the convict labourer who would wish to settle here? None. The only employers left will be some thirty large farmers, who, however, depend chiefly on their stock, and employ comparatively little labour, and some of that native; a body of smaller farmers who are little more than bailiffs of the monopolist company of storekeepers on the coast, to whom they have to send all their produce, to be taken at the storekeeper's price, and paid for in goods; the proprietors of some mines, which are, indeed, allowed on all hands to be very rich, but which require a large outlay in the way of train roads to bring their produce to the coast, and which are not at present being worked on a large scale; and a few dealers in timber.

There are, also, the Spanish missions; but these can scarcely be taken into account, as, although they are just now employing labour on buildings, they are intended for the employment of native labour, and are not commercial undertakings, being worked much on the principle of the old monastic establishments. But here the employment for the labourer and artisan ends, and if it should be sufficient to support the free labourers, it cannot touch the requirements of the seven thousand able-bodied convicts. Indeed, unless Government should carry out its old idea of turning the fine building now used as a prison into a sanatorium for the Indian army, for which it is in all its arrangements admirably adapted, or should give some temporary artificial relief, the withdrawal of the penal establishment must certainly cause great suffering, if not lamentable confusion. For a bond labourer, therefore, to think of settling here is impossible. He foresees that he will be as much forced to leave for want of subsistence, as by the bitter feeling existing between him and the free man. The

colony is as impossible to him as it is hateful, and how hateful it is, it is impossible to conceive.

But is there, then, no way of protecting society against the return of the class it so much dreads? There should be many. We ought to have more faith both in God and man than to doubt it. There is one way which is very simple indeed. Throwing aside all old notions of intricate penal discipline—which have failed—take up in some country favourable for agriculture a large tract of good land on a navigable river—map it out into allotments, each capable of extension, and make arrangements as for founding a colony of poor emigrants. Collect the necessary plant for farming operations, provide a class of practical instructors in farming, &c., with a small administrative and executive to maintain order—and take, in short, all the means necessary to support a poor colony in its first struggles. To this spot, as soon as possible after conviction (on any serious charge), if the unfortunate belongs to the class of professional thieves, and has had the separate system tried on him before to no purpose, send him at once. Waste neither time nor money on him in England; you can do nothing for him which would not be undone on board ship. Send him, therefore, at once. Arrived at the place of his exile, introduce him, not to a prison, but to a plot of ground, and give him the means of cultivating it, with support for the first year, on the understanding that he shall pay back the expenses incurred on his behalf in a certain number of years, the payment to be made in kind. Let his exile be perpetual; but let him in other respects and within a certain district be a free man, with an opportunity to make himself a home. Do this, and let him set to work directly he lands, and the exigencies and novelty of his position will rouse all his energies, and carry him through the first difficulties; and by the end of the first year he will have become thoroughly interested in his new home, and loth to give it up. Then assist him in bringing over his wife and family, or, if unmarried, any young woman he can persuade to come over and marry him, and, if you resolutely keep out from the district fermented liquors—for thieves are drunkards to a man, and wholly unable to deny themselves—he is a settled man. He has found a life which he perceives to have pleasures of which he had no idea, what he has is his own property and his own work, and the visions of city life will give way to the realities of country life. His youth, which sets at defiance your prison amendment system, will enable him to accept his new position all the more readily. But remember—if you would induce the man to give up his old life by offering him a new one—you must not clog that new life with conditions that will spoil all. You must not mix up systems which depend for their success on contrary principles. You must not keep your colonist in prison in the settlement—no, not for a day—or you break the very spring of that energy on which the success of your contrivance rests. Equally must you avoid making him a prisoner at large, subject to arbitrary jurisdiction, and consequently ungenerous and unfair treatment. There is no energy,

no enterprise, no progress, where there is not the fullest sense of personal security.

The proposed system of police surveillance over prisoners discharged in England may be all very well. The existence of an independent public press will prevent much of the abuse consequent on arbitrary jurisdiction, while, if the system is sufficiently harassing, it will be so detested by those who are under it, that they will get out of the country to avoid it. They will first break its rules and then fly to escape consequences. But in a country where there are no sources of profitable theft—where the slave is judged by his master, where there is no protection derived from the press or public opinion, and where it is desirable that your discharged prisoner should remain, it is the most ill-judged policy. As ticket-of-leave men are here never anything but prisoners—never safe from committal—harassed for the slightest thing, afforded only a mockery of a trial, they lose all care about doing well. They consider they may just as well be in prison as out, and are almost indifferent what becomes of them. Anything more preposterous or suicidal could not have been devised. The colonists call out for the abolition of conditional pardons, because directly a man becomes a "conditional," they are liable to support him, and they wish to keep the burden of all the unemployed labour on the shoulders of the home Government. But no system could work worse than does the ticket-of-leave system in operation here; under the pretence of its being necessary to keep the discharged convict down in one way, it keeps him down in every way. His only chance in the position in which he leaves prison lies in his having free scope for his energies; and here, surrounded as he is by restrictions and discouragements and humiliations of every kind, all power and will to do good is crushed out of him. The system outside is the fitting complement to that of public works; it just puts the finishing touch to the chronic evil which has been almost brought to a head in prison, and unless such a detestable system be abandoned, all hope of treating our sick man successfully is at an end. But give him a fair free start while his energies are unbroken, and you will probably effect your object. You may never make of your professional plunderer a man of high principle, but he will be "respectable."

The objection that will be raised to such a system will, of course, be, that it would be a premium to crime; and so it would be, were the professed thieves country labourers; but they are men living in the whirl of gay town life, drowned in the exciting pleasures which our large towns are alone capable of affording—and the life they lead is the only one they believe worth living for—and to such men the threat of perpetual banishment to such a home as I propose, is the most dreadful that could be held out. Western Australia as it is, with unlimited access to drink and licentiousness—the only two things, or nearly so, that are free to the convict—would be a paradise in comparison, for it holds out to them their most cherished enjoyments and a prospect of return; whereas

banishment to a sober working life in a wilderness means to their mind all that is most intolerable; and, though little given to fear, thoughtless, reckless, and improvident to a degree, if there is anything they would dread, it is such a future as I propose for them. As for Australia, I believe it to be spoilt for the purposes of a penal settlement beyond recovery. But, as long as it remains a penal colony, it might as well be relieved from some of the worst features of the system, especially as they are such as happen to be easy of removal. One of these is the rule which requires an imperial prisoner to find a master, previous to receiving his ticket-of-leave. What is the object proposed by such a rule it is difficult to conceive; but it looks as if it was intended to place the labourer (as regards wages) completely in the hands of the employer. The actual result is, that every prisoner, before his release, has to give a premium to obtain an agreement with a nominal master: the tariff for such agreements varies from 20*s.* to 3*l.*—the prisoner deriving no kind of advantage from them except his liberty. This rule is quite recent, and its origin was as marvellous as itself.

In February, 1863, there arrived from Bermuda some two hundred prisoners, of whom three-fourths were due for discharge; many of them having done twelve or fourteen years' actual imprisonment, or more than twice the period done for life-sentences in the country to which they had come. They expected, of course, to be released at once. Not so. The sudden arrival of so many men due for discharge so soon after the regular ship from England, threatened to glut every possible channel of employment, natural and artificial.

To release these men forthwith, or in the course of two or three months, was, according to colonial views, impossible. What, then, was done? A standing order issued to the effect that no imperial prisoner due for his ticket at the date of the said order should be discharged until he found a master; but that all who were not already due as aforesaid would be discharged in the usual way when their time was done. This naturally caused some dissatisfaction—not much, for it was too amusing; and the Bermudians, being almost all moneyed men, bought themselves out for 3*l.*, or 5*l.* (the tariff stood high at such a crisis), easily enough; but still there was some murmuring, and a good deal of laughter about it. And by degrees it dawned on the official mind itself that it was not quite the thing to keep men in prison simply because they had done the whole of their time, and to liberate junior prisoners over their heads. So the order was replaced by another, directing that all imperial prisoners should find masters before they were released, while to obviate the difficulty of a man who was supposed to have no communication with the outer world finding a master in a country a thousand miles in length, he was allowed a day's pass, and for a short time—till, indeed, it was found that it brought no applications—his name was inserted in the *Gazette*. And so the rule, after having passed through a variety of transient phases, now stands. Here is one hindrance to the convict, which we would think might be wisely dis-

pensed with. It has already cost the poor prisoner hundreds of pounds in actual cash, and, indirectly, probably thousands. Again, discharged prisoners, even after they have been six months at liberty and can work for themselves, cannot go from one district to another without applying to a magistrate for a pass (a thing by no means granted as a matter of course), nor can they carry a gun, or fish, or, in short, go a hundred yards in any direction whatever without meeting some obstacles. A (free) master's pass will clear everything, and take them anywhere ; but without that they cannot move : another sacrifice of the convict to the colonist. And yet one would have thought that a man deemed fit for discharge might at least be trusted in an uninhabited country, and allowed such harmless privileges as might serve to attach him to it. Above all, something might be done to protect the convict against his great temptation—drunkenness. At present it meets him with open doors.

The spirit-shop is one of the first things that stands in his way as he leaves prison ; and though he may not cross the river without the formality of a pass, he may enter the dram-shop and get drunk without hindrance. The policeman sees him enter, knows what will be the result, and when the publican has done with him, takes him to the station. Men come in from the country with the earnings of years, hand them to the publican, call for spirits in buckets-full, and seldom leave till the publican finds that their 30*l.* or 40*l.* is spent.

These houses are rendered all the more dangerous, because, in consequence of a very high licence being exacted, the liquors are adulterated to excess. Now, surely, as the ticket-of-leave man is in all other respects a mere prisoner at large, and as in his case every rule of political economy is set at naught, surely he could be prevented drinking in a public-house, or buying spirits without a doctor's certificate, and then only in certain quantities and after certain intervals of time. One thing I know : the men would thank Government for it. Things at all events might be managed, one would think, better than they are, when it is within the truth to say that no spot in the worst districts of London and Liverpool can match the little towns of Freemantle and Perth in drunkenness and debauchery. But no, it is for the benefit of the publican, who is a free colonist ; and for the colonist nothing is too great a sacrifice, not even that reformation which the English people have spent hundreds of pounds to accomplish in each individual instance. The policeman may drag the intoxicated and drugged ticket-holder to prison, but he must not prevent his spending his substance with the publican, though he knows that the second glass is as sure to reduce the poor man to helplessness as it is to follow the first.

Salvors.



F a man find a purse in the street, the law imposes upon him the obligation of restoring it to its owner if he can be discovered ; but, if the same man, when in a boat at sea, recover a piece of wreck, or spar, or any other article of value, and subsequently deposit it with the custom-house officer of the nearest port (who is generally appointed receiver of Admiralty droits), he is entitled to receive from that functionary a proportion of the value of the property saved. The remuneration so received is called salvage. The amount awarded depends upon the following circumstances, as mentioned

i. a Minute of the Board of Trade :—1st. The degree of danger from which the lives or property are rescued. 2nd. The value of the property saved. 3rd. The risk incurred by the salvors. 4th. The value of their vessel, and the danger to which it was exposed. 5th. The skill shown, and the time and labour occupied.

To a certain extent this compensation or salvage has been the stimulus for overcoming perils and surmounting difficulties in saving life from shipwrecked vessels ; for the beachmen, as in years past they launched their yawls or luggers to save a crew, in nine cases out of ten entertained a latent hope that "something" might be done "for the ship." It was a natural wish ; and those who now man the life-boats have the unquestionable right to save what they can, provided they do not forget the peculiar occupation in which they are engaged, and always remember that the saving of life is their first duty.

Few visitors to the different watering-places fail to notice the humble shed containing the life-boat ; and whilst they listen, with bated breath, to tales of hardships endured and dangers surmounted in the sacred task of

saving life, they think more kindly of the seafaring population by whom they are surrounded. There is, however, a part of the coast where a life-boat would be comparatively useless, and deeds of heroism are done unknown to the general reader. We refer to the low marsh-land stretching from the mouth of the Thames, and forming one side of the "Swin," and the low portion of Suffolk, from Harwich Harbour to Orfordness. A glance at a chart, or even an ordinary map, will convey to the reader some notion of the difficulties of navigating ships between those two points. A long sand called the Maplin, with an offshoot named the Buxey, extends from Shoeburyness, in the Thames, to a point opposite the River Colne. That part of the sand forming the fringe of Foulness Island is dry and hard for miles at low water. Between that and the Barrows and other sands is the passage called the Swin, which may be regarded as a sort of marine Fleet Street. From the mouth of the River Colne to a point nearly opposite Walton-on-the-Naze, another long sand stretches, called the Galfleet, about seven or eight miles from the Essex coast, between which and the sand there is another highway called the Wallett. Outside this there are other sands, as the "Sunk" and the "Long Sands," with channels between them. With the exception of a cluster of rocks called the West Rocks, some seven miles off Harwich Harbour (from which stone for manufacturing cement is dredged), the same peculiarity of sands exists, down as far as Orfordness on the Suffolk coast. It is obvious, therefore, that a life-boat, stationed on any part of the land opposite these sands, would be at a distance too great from the scene of disaster to be of much avail; but, as vessels frequently "come to grief" on one or other of them, a class of men from time immemorial have devoted themselves to the work of saving life and property. They are called salvors, and their vessels, in the Essex vernacular, salvagers—the accent being laid on the *a*.

In bygone days the salvor employed his leisure time in smuggling, regarding it as an occupation incidental to his own peculiar calling; but for that reason he was never known to enter into any conflict with the customs' officers. Friends on shore had to manage the running. It was enough for him to bring his vessel or his boat, with the tubs, within their reach. The wooded slopes of Mersea Island, the barn of a friendly yeoman, and a wood on one of the banks of the River Colne (now cut down), were all favourite places for concealment of contraband articles; and so long as the farmer found a cask of spirits occasionally left at his door, he was not particular to inquire in what way it came, or why his watch-dog had barked on the previous night. Even within the last five years a cargo of tobacco was landed from one of the rivers inside Harwich Harbour; and the fact was only discovered by the breaking of an axle-tree of a four-wheel waggon at Dedham, and the curiosity of a rural policeman to ascertain its contents.

It may readily be understood how the salvor of the present day, listening to the tales of hair-breadth escapes and cunning shifts of his predecessors, has a decided aversion to fiscal regulations, and contemns all

parliamentary enactments respecting wreck and salvage. Hence he has a liking for barometers, compasses, running rigging, handy blocks, and other minor articles found in stranded vessels, which frequently prevents him reporting the possession of these waifs of the sea to the Custom-house authorities, as he ought by law to do; and this affection is equally fervid for the produce of the Holland stills, whether in small casks, or in bottles cased in wicker called "demi-johns." An amusing illustration of this occurred a year or two since. The whole population of a fishing village in one of the Essex estuaries suddenly appeared to be awakened to extreme joviality. Search was made, and in corners of cupboards, under beds, in outbuildings and in gardens, the demi-john, or a portion of its contents, was discovered; and some ingenious salvor, intent on having a stock for all eventualities, had concealed five of these large bottles in a brook covered with rushes and grass, a mile from the village.

As a set-off to these peccadilles, the salvor is brave and daring to an extent bordering on recklessness. A few years since a vessel laden with a valuable cargo was stranded on the southern or outer side of the Gunfleet Sands, nearly opposite Clacton on the Essex coast. Two or three vessels were in attendance on her, and the captain and crew had been taken out of her by the master of one of these vessels and landed at Wivenhoe. Lloyd's agent wished to go to the place where the vessel lay, and a salvor whom we will call "Tom" offered to take that gentleman in his vessel, but his small boat was at the wreck. As he wished to arrive there as speedily as possible, Tom conceived the brilliant idea of sailing down the Wallett on the north or inner side of the sand, and then walking some three-quarters of a mile on the sand to the ship. By the time they had approached the spot twilight was fast yielding to darkness, and the sand, instead of being dry, as Lloyd's agent had been led to suppose, was covered with water to a depth of two feet or more. What water there was on the other side of the sand, or what holes there were, he knew not. The outline of the stranded vessel was only dimly visible, and the agent very discreetly thought the salvage vessel the safer place of the two. But Tom was not to be daunted. He splashed on to the sand, and was soon lost sight of as he went floundering along. It was now quite dark; there was no light in the vessel, and the tide had commenced flowing. For some quarter-of-an-hour those on board the smack listened attentively, and then nothing was heard but the moaning of the waves on the sand. An anxious interval of suspense occurred, and they almost gave Tom up for lost. To their relief, however, they now heard loud shouts, evidently in answer to some one calling from the water, and a light flashing from the vessel informed them, according to a preconcerted arrangement, that Tom had arrived safely on board. He had been obliged, however, to swim the latter part of the distance.

To bravery, the salvor adds skill and dexterity in the management of his craft; and he is persevering in his labours, often when success seems hopeless. The first object is to get the stranded vessel off the sands, and

it may be said that mercenary considerations have prompted him to the extraordinary efforts which have been sometimes made. But instances without number abound, where the salvor has risked his life to save others, without the hope of reward : his character, on this point, stands out in bold relief, and free from suspicion.

Some salvors have a quiet and taciturn manner ; others, a bold and defiant air, which carries them through all the "little difficulties" of their calling from sheer weight of character ; others, again, have the art of persuasion so largely bestowed by nature, and cultivated by art, that it is impossible, even when you know they are wrong, to contradict them with any chance of success. Imperturbable in temper, and bland in demeanour, they listen most courteously to all that is advanced, and then shunting themselves by a "strategic movement" from the position they had assumed, take up fresh ground, only to repeat the manœuvre when you have again successfully assailed them. This art is not to be despised, as we shall show.

The craft in which they "go to sea" vary in size from twenty to forty tons. They are good sailing boats, especially in bad weather, are cutter-rigged, and manned by a crew of five men and two apprentices, one of these being generally far advanced towards manhood. Their draught of water is easy, varying from seven to nine feet. They carry notrysail, and depend entirely in bad weather on their mainsail, foresail, and jib. Each vessel has a boat from 16 to 18 feet long, but is unprovided with lifebelts, or other equivalent apparatus. To stimulate the crew to activity, no wages are paid, but each man, down to the apprentice, has a proportionate share of the earning, according to his rating ; a certain part being always first set apart for the "flag" or vessel.

The salvor, from his intimate acquaintance with the tides and eddies between the sands, generally anchors in some spot where he can be sure of a night's rest. Except under some special circumstances, he selects a "berth" to the leeward of a sand; so that if the wind increase during the night, the bank affords him a protection from the rising sea, and, though his vessel would probably beat off a lee-shore better than any coaster between the Thames and the Tyne, he always shuns it.

As soon as the faintest streak of light is seen in the east, the salvor "turns out;" and if there be a strong wind with a "nasty swell and hazy withal," he enjoys his early cup of coffee with considerable zest. Soon, however, he sails, feeling his way along the edge of the sand with his lead, until the dim light of a winter's morning reveals to him some mark, known to salvors only, by which he can dispense with his dumb guide ; and the same dim light, perchance, reveals to him a brig on the other side of the Gunfleet Sand. The captain has mistaken one light for another, or the thick weather has prevented his seeing either, or the ship has "missed stays," or from some other cause equally intelligible to the master, but unsatisfactory to the owner, the *Lively Sally*, laden with grain for the North, is hard and fast on the sand, bumping and thumping as

each wave partially lifts her, and threatening to roll her masts out every minute. As the wind is easterly, the salvors, in turning to windward towards her, have ample time to determine on a course to be pursued. They observe that a part of the bulwarks is washed away, and a boat floating away over the sands, and our friend Tom says, one "boat and part of the bulwark washed away at sea, and that's the long-boat they've launched, adrift there." He then directs a private signal to be made, and another vessel, of exactly the same size as his own, is shortly seen tacking towards the ship. Tom now says, "I think we shall fetch her in the next tack." And so he does, but instead of "heaving-to," or anchoring, down goes the helm, and his vessel starts away from the ship. At the same time, casting his eye over the quarter-board or rail of his vessel, he observes a commotion on the deck of the stranded ship; and in a minute or two an ensign, with the Union Jack downwards, is hoisted on the rigging as a signal of distress. "Ah!" says Tom; "we must teach these coasting fellows manners. If they want us they must say so."

He now anchors his little vessel opposite to the stranded ship, and mans his boat. If the sea be very rough he does not attempt to pull towards the vessel, for if once his small boat fell into the trough of the sea she would be immediately capsized. This is one of the greatest perils the salvor encounters; he, therefore, with the four oars, keeps the bow of the boat "head to the sea," and allows her to drift gently to leeward, until, as he passes the stem of the stranded ship, he lays hold of a rope thrown to him for that purpose. He then drifts a little farther, and those on board haul the boat into the comparative shelter afforded by the ship. The skill and care—nay, delicate manœuvring—necessary to perform this operation safely, can scarcely be exaggerated. Often one of the masts or a yard of the vessel has been blown away, and, tumbling alongside, threatens to stave in the boat. At other times the ship is a foreigner, and the sailors on board, being frightened, want to jump into the small-boat as it passes them; and as a consequence they frequently imperil the lives of the salvors to no ordinary extent. The position of the ship cannot always be accurately ascertained, and danger is therefore imminent. A melancholy accident occurred from this peril about two years since. A vessel was seen on the West Rocks, off Harwich. Three boats, with four men in each, put off to her. The sea was not extremely rough, but just as the boats approached her the strong tide swung her off the ledge, so that she heeled over, and her yards and masts smashed the three boats. In a moment twelve men, the brothers and sons of those on board the salvage smacks, were in the water struggling for life. A father saw his own son perish within fifty yards of him, he being unable to render any assistance. Out of the twelve salvors only four were saved.

To return, however, to the *Lively Sally*. Tom, by this time, has had a long and animated conversation with the captain. He points out to him, with rough eloquence, that his boats are all gone; that the sea is making "fast on the flood," that he has "nothing to lay out an anchor with,"

and that after his men go to work "they ought to have 400*l.* at the least."

Now the captain happens to be part owner, is an old coaster, knows exactly where he is now that the day has broken, and thinks the demand exorbitant. Finally, having taken some strong waters to keep his courage up, he is rather irritable; and as Tom is hot-tempered, there appears no probability of any arrangement being made to get the vessel off. Meantime, the *Lively Sally* continues bumping and thumping, and the salvors make remarks in an undertone, to which the crew, as is intended, listen with considerable attention.

But now another actor appears on the scene. It is our persuasive friend, the oily-tongued salvor, who has quickly responded to Tom's signal, and, from experience, knows as well what has passed between Tom and the captain as if he had been present. As he climbs over the bulwark he touches the peak of his "sou'wester" to the captain, and says,—“Good morning, sir; very coarse weather.”

Tom, who is behind the captain, holds up four fingers. Our persuasive friend merely bends his head slowly, in token of intelligence. He does not nod. It is an inclination which would do honour to a Cabinet Minister. The captain, pleased with his demeanour, says—“This fellow here has actually asked me 400*l.* to carry out an anchor to get my ship off!”

“Has he really, sir?”

“Yes; what will you take one out for?”

“Why, sir, it wouldn't be much use taking an anchor out, unless the ship was got off; and she lays in such a curious place that I doubt there'd be some work, and we should want all the hands we've got here to get her off this tide. How was it you got on, captain?”

Now, when a vessel is thumping on the sands more and more every minute, this cool inquiry is rather apt to irritate the man who is responsible, whether it be his individual fault or not, for the perilous position in which his ship is placed; and he, therefore, answers rather gruffly,—“What business is that of yours?”

But our salvor has been on board many vessels and seen many captains in the same position. He is glad of this explosion and outbreak of temper. It is an advantage of which he avails himself.

“Oh, no, sir; I know it isn't. Only last night was such a thick night that nobody could see the lights, and I actually touched the sand myself.”

The captain is propitiated at once. Here is a man, always in this part, who went on the sand himself! It takes all the blame off his shoulders. He replies at once: “It was, as you say, very thick. Now, what will you and your men get this vessel off for?”

“We couldn't do it alone, sir; we must have the others to help us. For all of us, sir, looking at the risk we run, we could not say less than 300*l.*”

The captain thinks. 100*l.* less than the other fellow!

"I'll give you 200*l.*"

"No, sir ; we can't take that."

The *Lively Sally* gives another bump.

"250*l.* then," says the captain.

"Well, you must have it your own way, captain. Just write us out an agreement to that effect."

The captain, Tom, and our persuasive friend go down below, and soon reappear. The men in the boats know what this means, and now a scene of activity takes place. The wind has freshened, and the sea too, but the salvors care little for that. Anchors are taken out in their boats, and laid in the channel; great lawlers appear from the holds of the two smacks ; every rope, every chain soon has a strain on it, as much as it can bear ; each movement of the *Lively Sally* is watched most intently, as the waves, in all their strength, break over her, and toss her about, as if she were some worthless toy. The men, soaked through and through with salt-water, stand to their posts ; and Tom, who has been intent for a minute or two, conning the stem of the vessel, roars out, "She cants ! heave away, lads !" At the same time, he waves his hand to the two men on board each of the smacks. Click, click, goes the windlass on the ship : a cheerful noise echoed by the smacks. The *Lively Sally* gets her head to it. The handspikes move faster. "Up jib, captain," roars Tom, "twill draw her ahead." Tom is right, and in a few minutes she is off. The pumps are sounded, and a considerable quantity of water is found in her. So under these circumstances, as the wind is fair for the Colne, four men are left on board to assist the crew in pumping ; the two smacks take the *Lively Sally* in tow, what sail she has is hoisted, and before the night comes the captain finds himself on a mud-bank in the river, instead of bobbing about between the Cork Light and Orfordness. The salvors are the first to carry home the news of this success ; and an observant person might notice, without the risk of damaging his powers by over-exertion, that the wives of Tom and our persuasive friend are decorated in a somewhat florid style on the Sunday following.

The case of the *Lively Sally* is one of an ordinary character. Sometimes the vessel is a foreigner, the captain of which, overcome by the eloquence of our persuasive salvor, leaves her in fright, believing she must go to pieces immediately. Foolish man ! it is high water when he leaves his ship, and as the tide falls away, she is left high and dry. The salvors walk round her, fill up the seams with oakum, and as the captain is going to Lloyd's the next morning to report his loss, he is startled to hear of a telegram from their agent on the coast, stating that the *Caterina* was "got off the Gunfleet Sands at the night-tide, with part of cargo thrown overboard, and not making any water." In this case, as the captain had abandoned the ship, the salvors would be entitled to a large reward ; perhaps one-third of the value of the ship and cargo.

But these cases are rare. Too frequently the vessel becomes a total wreck, and breaks up, or sinks in deep water, when floated off the sands ;

and after a week's hard work, both day and night, amidst impending dangers, and with clothes continually wet, the salvor reaches home laden with materials, insufficient to compensate him for the wear and tear of his vessel, and the loss of ropes, completely used up in abortive attempts to heave the ship off.

Again, being at sea in all weathers, he is exposed, notwithstanding his local knowledge, to the dangers common to the mariner. Occasionally a light collier, running to the North with a fair wind and a sleepy look-out, "fools" him on a dark night, and sometimes even sinks him; a hasty jump into the small boat astern being the only chance of saving his life. Then, notwithstanding all his caution and experience, he is occasionally "caught in a breeze." Some four or five vessels had brought up—*i. e.* anchored—at the commencement of the fearful gale of last December under the protection of a sand. During the night the wind shifted in a squall, and all were compelled to run for Harwich Harbour. The writer of this paper was in the same gale, but on the south coast, and he asked the master of one of the smallest smacks what canvas he carried. His answer was, "Why, sir, we carried no canvas at all. We dragged a four-reefed mainsail half set and a storm jib, and could just fetch in; but how we got there I really can't tell you." His was a vessel of eighteen or twenty tons. The larger class of course made better weather.

Independently of these dangers, the salvors are subject to dreadful accidents in boarding vessels, and in rescuing them from destruction. A block falls from the mast-head, and the unfortunate salvor receives a blow which renders an eye useless for life. A hawser breaks, and a leg is broken. The "pall does not bite," and the handspike flies up, breaking a rib, or an arm, or knocking all his front teeth out. Cold and rheumatism seize him, in consequence of the dreadful exposure to the weather to which he is subjected; whilst sprained tendons, bruised skins, and hands covered with scars, may be considered his normal condition. In fact, the body of an old salvor is a complete chart or history of the wrecks off the Essex coast for the last half century; and if in narrating an incident the memory falters, he generally lights upon some old wound, or a finger with the end off, which gives him a clue to his tale.

Bold, hardy, adventurous and brave, the salvor spends his life in a never-ending conflict with the wind and waves, and hesitates not to face any danger for the sake of saving life. His little boat, seventeen feet long, has often backed, in the way we have before described, to a wreck, and in two or three trips brought to his vessel some twelve or fourteen souls, when all that the salvor has on board is placed at their disposal. It may not be much, but there it is. So when a sinking vessel is scudding before the gale under bare poles, with a flag of distress in the rigging, the salvor, although he knows nothing can be done for the ship, will "beat up" or "run down" to her, as the case may be, and try every plan which boldness can suggest or prudence dictate, to save the crew—services which the Emperor of the French and the Board of Trade have

several times acknowledged by substantial and handsome rewards. We ought therefore to be

To their virtues ever kind;
To their vices *somewhat* blind.

True courage they certainly possess, though tinged, as is the case with sailors, with a superstitious dread of the dead. The same man who in a dark winter's night waded and swam across the Gunfleet Sand, was some few years since left with an old man named Tabor Hull to take care of one of the vessels, the crew of which had rowed home. Tabor Hull had tucked himself up comfortably in his berth, and Tom having raked out the fire from the little stove, snuffed the candle, preparatory to making up his own bed. Having completed this operation he was about to "turn in" when the voice of Tabor Hull was heard :—"I say, Tom."

"Yes, mate."

"If I should have a fit, heave a bucket of water over me."

Tom was too astounded, or, as he expressed it, "cumflummuxed," to make any reply. He went on deck in the hope that some vessel might be anchored near him, but not one was in sight. Then he thought of taking off his clothes and swimming ashore. On reflection, however, he deemed the distance too great. Whilst revolving these various schemes, and listening attentively to catch the sound of the splash of oars, old Tabor was enjoying a sound sleep. Tom now dared not go below lest he should see him in the dreaded fit, and yet he could not continue walking the deck all night; so he tapped pretty loudly with a handspike over the old gentleman's bed-place, and had the satisfaction of seeing the red cap appear with an inquiry as to the cause of the noise. "Only going to give her a little more chain, matey," was Tom's gracious reply, for he felt he ought to be kind. He took advantage of this opportunity to go below. If old Tabor snored, Tom thought it was the prelude to a fit, and if he were quiet he feared he might be dead. So all the night long Tom was lighting lucifer matches to look at his friend's countenance, and was never so overjoyed as when daylight appeared and the men returned.

Tom said nothing to any one of the communication which Tabor had made, and which the old gentleman in the morning told him he must regard as confidential. About two years afterwards, when walking on the quay of his native place, he saw him approaching.

"I've been thinking," said the old gentleman, "that you and I, Tom, might go alone down the river in the *Little Blossom* for a week or so, dredging."

"No, mate, I'll never be in a vessel alone with you again, if I know it. Never will I pass such another night, as I did off the Knowl-buoy, after you said to me, 'Tom, if I have a fit, heave a bucket of water over me.'"

John Leech.

NEARLY every home in England has lost a friend in the sudden departure of John Leech. It is not an artist of the common type who has taken leave of us. Artists great as he have gone before him, and left no void in our households. He, through the happy adaptation of his art, had made himself our familiar friend, had communed with us from week to week, had seized our passing thoughts and the fleeting images of daily occurrence, had been, as it were, present with us in all our haunts, had led and mingled in our conversation, had seen what we saw, had felt what we felt, had made merry with us by the way, had been for more than twenty years exchanging glances with us, and humouring us with thousands of bright fancies. His was an art that, in a peculiar sense, came home to our bosoms and businesses, and became part and parcel of our social life. His pictures were not to be hung at arm's length upon our walls. They came down from our walls ; we had them on our tables ; we kept them in our pockets ; we held them in railway-carriages with the wind dashing in our faces ; we got them by post in far-away country houses ; we took them with the newspaper to con in the shadow of the trees ; we talked of them for days ; we not only talked of them, but also seemed to talk with them. We knew Briggs, we were not unacquainted with Mossoo, we joined in the laughter which Mr. Tom Noddy provoked, we adored the bevies of fair damsels, to whom our friend introduced us, and we envied Mr. Punch, who received their caresses under the mistletoe. The artist seemed to be speaking with us, and to be one of us. He made himself kin to every rank of life. He seemed to be equally at home, whether in the filthiest dens of London or in the most brilliant drawing-rooms. He was with us and among us through his art, as no man before him had been. He was a felt presence in all our assemblies, and it was the presence of a fine spirit and a most genial nature. Who is this kind and sunny companion whom we seemed to know so well, and whose death is felt almost as a personal loss by myriads that never saw his face ? We all knew or seemed to know the artist : we should like to know the man.

But Mr. Leech, more than any other artist, lived in his art, and carried it into the social life of his time ; so that, in his case, it is impossible to distinguish between the man and his profession. It is his peculiarity as an artist, that into art he transfused his life—the life, habits, thoughts, observations of one of the best of English gentlemen, full of feeling, quick of eye, refined of taste, fond of society, delighting in all manly exercises, and moving much about the world. So much of an entire life, indeed, with its abounding activities and many-changing hues,

it had never before been possible to translate into the forms of pictorial art. And thus, when any one who had the privilege of knowing Mr. Leech is asked to describe what manner of man he was, the answer is, that, literally and without a metaphor, he lives in his printed pages, and there is his portraiture. Almost everything one can say of him has been already registered by his own pencil. Not that he was an egotist, save in so far as we are all egotists in being able to speak only of or from our own experiences. From day to day, and from year to year, for nearly the quarter of a century, Mr. Leech pictured his experiences of life with infallible accuracy and with undeviating regularity, and the result is such a memoir of his mind, such a continuous reflection of his history, as no other artist before him has been able to leave on record. Anything we can say of his private life must appear poor and tame in comparison with his own vivid reflections and sketches of the life in which he moved, of the daily round of his observations, of the people he mixed with, of the cares he sympathized with, of the follies that amused him, of the things he loved and of the things he hated. Nevertheless, the few notes which follow may have their interest, as even the most trifling remembrances of a great man are to be cherished like the relics of a saint.

John Leech was a London boy, born on the 29th of August, 1817. He was educated at the Charterhouse with another boy, who afterwards became famous, and who was somewhat his senior—William Makepeace Thackeray. When he left school it was to study medicine; but these were days when even the best medical education which London could afford was not of a very high order, and when it was more common than it is now to train the young student by an apprenticeship to some general practitioner—in short, by a system of fagging; and John Leech, bent on entering a profession which was indicated to him by his surname, became the *fag* of a medical man, who may best be called Rawkins, because two incipient surgeons, Albert Smith and the subject of this memoir, have given him celebrity under that name. “Mr. Rawkins,” says Albert Smith, “was so extraordinary a person for a medical practitioner, that had we only read of him instead of having known him, we should at once have put him down as the far-fetched creation of an author’s brain. He was about eight-and-thirty years old and of Herculean form, except his legs, which were small by comparison with the rest of his body. But he thought that he was modelled after the statues of antiquity: and indeed as respected his nose, which was broken, he was not far wrong in his idea—that feature having been rather damaged in some hospital skirmish when he was a student. His face was adorned with a luxuriant fringe of black whiskers, meeting under his chin, whilst his hair of the same hue was cut rather short about his head, and worn without the least regard to any particular style or direction. But it was his class of pursuits which made him so singular a character. Every available apartment in his house, not actually occupied by human beings, was appropriated to the conserving of innumerable rabbits, guinea-pigs, and ferrets. His areas were filled with

poultry; birdcages hung at every window; and the whole of his roof had been converted into one enormous pigeon-trap, in which it was his most favourite occupation to sit on fine afternoons with a pipe and brandy-and-water, and catch his neighbours' birds. He had very little private practice: the butcher, baker, and tobacconist, were his chief patients, and employed him more especially with the intention of working out their accounts. He derived his principal income from the retail of his shop, his appointments of medical man to the police force and parish poor, and breeding fancy rabbits. These various avocations pretty well filled up his time; and, when at home, he passed his spare minutes in practising gymnastics—balancing himself upon one hand, laying hold of staples and keeping himself out at right angles to the wall, with other feats of strength, the acquisition of which he deemed necessary in enabling him to support the character of Hercules—his most favourite personation—with due effect."

There may be some exaggeration in the picture of Rawkins as presented in the *Adventures of Mr. Ledbury*; and in order to tone it down a little we have ventured to omit a few of the details. Still there is truth enough in it to enable one to understand how young John Leech should be attracted to Rawkins. A doctor who kept pigeons and rabbits and guinea-pigs, who was great in wrestling, boxing, and running, who excelled in all feats of strength, and who combined the pursuit of science with the enjoyment of sport, would naturally be the hero of a schoolboy's fancy, and the great exemplar in whose footsteps it would be glorious to follow. No one, however, will be surprised to learn that Rawkins did not succeed in his profession, and that he was not likely to give any pupil of his a prosperous entrance into it. Young Leech soon discovered that a life moulded by Rawkins, however it might lure his boyish ambition, was not going to yield him much profit. In point of fact, Rawkins himself saw the wisdom ere long of relinquishing his profession. He had for some time been paying his addresses to the widowed landlady of the large public-house at the end of his street. Eventually he married her and turned tapster. His old pupils used to call upon him and patronize his beer, which he drew for them in his shirt-sleeves. It is said that he was originally a Quaker, and that he died a missionary at the antipodes. Young Leech's indentures were transferred from this queer character to Dr. John Cockle, who is now physician to the Royal Free Hospital; but it does not appear that the study of medicine, when under a new preceptor it became more serious, became also more attractive to him. He had early shown a talent for drawing, and his fellow-students in St. Bartholomew's Hospital still remember how he amused them with his sketches. Mr. Perceval Leigh, for one, remembers him there in 1832, when he was but fifteen years of age, attending the anatomical lectures of Mr. Stanley. He remembers especially that Leech was accustomed to make notes of the more remarkable faces of his condisciples. Amongst them was one whose peculiar plumpness and roundness of cheek had obtained for him the nickname of *Buccinator*, from the muscle which is especially exerted in the

act of blowing a trumpet. The comical effect of his rotund countenance was increased by a pair of spectacles that made him the very image of Mr. Pickwick ; and with that image, doubtless, in his eye, Leech called upon Mr. Dickens while the *Pickwick Papers* were in progress, and offered to continue the series of illustrations which were interrupted by the death of Seymour. The Buccinator, however, was but one of many sketches with which he amused his companions. Another which is well remembered is that of Jack Reeve, as Cupid, dancing on a sunflower. The earliest sketches of his which are still preserved belong to this period, and have been kindly lent to us through Mr. Mark Lemon. They cover both sides of a sheet of paper, and have punning titles after the manner of the woodcuts in which Thomas Hood played his pranks. Here is one of them, not altogether the best, but selected because it is the most complete.



It is entitled *Belligerents*; and one can see in it distinctly, rough as it is, a foreshadowing of the ease with which afterwards he depicted any kind of action. It was always his great strength as a draughtsman that he drew action with astonishing fidelity. It is in the seizure of evanescent action that the genius of the artist is most clearly seen, and Mr. Leech was always most happy where there was most movement in his pictures,

He published his first work at the age of eighteen. It was entitled, *Etchings and Sketchings, by A. Pen, Esq.*; and had this characteristic motto from the speech of Cardinal Wolsey :—

That noble lady
Or gentleman that is not freely merry
Is not my friend.

The little work, published at the price of “2s. plain, 3s. coloured,” consisted of four quarto sheets, covered with clever sketches, slightly caricatured, of cabmen, policemen, street-musicians, donkeys, broken-down hacks, and many other oddities of London life. Most of these sketches, however, were very incomplete, and were mere suggestions of heads, of half-length and whole-length figures. About the same time, he turned his attention to lithography, and by means of it got into circulation some political caricatures, which are not without ability. Their ability, however, is that of the man who had not yet found the secret of his power, and was compelled to accommodate himself to the standard of the print-sellers. Having drawn his pictures upon a stone, he has been known to spend a weary day in carrying the heavy stone from publisher to publisher in search of a buyer. It was his business, therefore, to work in the style which was then most popular. One of these lithographs will pass for all. We have now before us a large folio, containing two pictures, entitled, the one, *Vive le Roi*, the other, *Vive la Reine*. The Melbourne Ministry had been severely criticized by *The Times* newspaper, which had just then begun to proclaim that the Whigs were incompetent, that they were alienating their best friends, and that the Tories were rising again into favour. Mr. Leech's two sketches were addressed to *The Times*, and were an attempt to turn its statement into ridicule. In the one, there was a crowd of butchers, surrounded with carcases, and shouting some doggerel with the chorus of “Vive le Raw! Vive le Raw!” In the other, a throng of cabmen had mustered together in the midst of a pelting shower, and, brandishing their whips, roared their doggerel with the chorus of “Vive la Rain! Vive la Rain!” These were published as “facts for *The Times* proving the increase of Toryism.” So Mr. Leech got on as he could, offering his sketches to one publisher after another, working very hard, and earning but small pay. It was in these days of uncertainty that he applied to Mr. Dickens for permission to illustrate the *Pickwick Papers*; but Mr. Hablot Browne had been before him. Then he concocted schemes of drollery with his friends, and especially with Mr. Perceval Leigh, who had been his fellow-student at St. Bartholomew's. Thus it was a favourite idea of Mr. Leech's to publish a comic Latin Grammar as a freak, he contributing the illustrations, and Mr. Leigh the text. This, as he proposed it, would have been a bit of fun, consisting of a few pages; but ultimately, as published in 1840, it became a more elaborate burlesque. It has the merit of being not only the most amusing, but also the most legitimate, of the burlesques in which Mr. Leech took part—much more legitimate, for example, than a *Comic History of England*. And now

we begin to find Mr. Leech active in many ways. He has sketches in *Bell's Life*; he produces a most successful burlesque of Mulready's post-office envelope; in conjunction with his friend Leigh, he gets up a quiz upon the fashionable art and literature of the day, under the title of *The Fiddle-Faddle Fashion Book*. The same pair, working in concert, next produce *The Children of the Mobility*, a parody on a then well-known work devoted to the serious glorification of our juvenile aristocracy; and next again, *The Comic English Grammar*; while about the same time Mr. Leech obtains a regular engagement on *Bentley's Miscellany*.

Then came *Punch*, the memoirs of which will one day form one of the most curious chapters in the history of English literature and art. We all know what an extraordinary success has attended this publication; but perhaps we do not sufficiently consider that an extraordinary combination of genius, marshalled with uncommon skill, could alone have led to such success. Eternal joking is, after all, a very dreary thing, and requires to be sustained by qualities of mind which are above joking. It is not because a comic paper was wanted, and *Punch* was the first to supply the want, that it has succeeded. Regular comic writing, squibs by the yard, and jokes by the dozen, are not more interesting than a manufactory of poems would be, sonnets by the score, and soliloquies by the hundred-weight. *Punch* was singular in being the product of men of genius, true and rare. It is impossible to point to any associated work of any country in which were engaged such a constellation of genius. Of the living one must be silent; but one can speak freely of Hood, Jerrold, Thackeray, and Leech:—of Hood, whose power over language was an exquisite witchcraft, whose mind was elf-like, and who, if he was habitually gay and lisson as a fairy, had also his statelier and sterner moods, in which he reached even to the tragic; of Jerrold, who was undoubtedly at the time of his death the greatest wit in England, and who seemed almost as a disembodied spirit to any one that saw him and heard him—saw him looking out of his keen colourless eyes, and witnessed the miraculous rapidity and complexity of his thoughts; of Thackeray, who belongs to the race of the giants, and who being one of the best prose writers of any age, was the most classical writer of his own; lastly, of Leech—that man of remarkable genius, whose collected works form such a history, not only of his own mind, but also of the social structure of his day, as no other country, no previous time, possesses, and who shines forth in every page to which he has put his hand as the man of truth and gentle heart; the man who, abounding in fun, never was carried away by it, nor for the sake of a laugh turned his pencil to shame; the man of honour and refinement, who loved to dwell upon all that was good, and beautiful, and natural; and who, when he lashed what was ugly, or mean, or odious, did so with a lightness of humour and a polish of manner that are a thousand times more effectual than the indignant rage or the rude caricature of his predecessors in pictorial satire.

The first number of *Punch* appeared on the 17th July, 1841, and Mr. Leech's first contribution to it appeared in its fourth issue on the 7th of August. It seems to be his only contribution to the first half-yearly volume of *Punch*; and his contributions to the second volume even do not seem to be very numerous—little more than half-a-dozen. This first sketch is entitled "Foreign Affairs," and is a pretty accurate representation of such foreigners as may be seen any day in London. What is most remarkable about the sketch, however, is this, that it sent down the circulation of *Punch* to half what it was. It is an odd thing to say that he, who afterwards became the most conspicuous and the most attractive contributor to the well-known quarto print, should have done it a serious injury in his first connection with it. The injury was effected in this wise. The process had not then been discovered of dividing a wood-block into parts, and giving the parts to several hands to be cut. The artist drew upon an entire block which could not be taken to pieces, and only one engraver could work upon it at a time. Such blocks, therefore, if they were of considerable size, took a long time to cut; and Mr. Leech's first drawing for *Punch*, as it filled a whole page, was not ready for publication on the appointed day. It was a day behindhand, and this it was that played havoc with the sale. But the fact itself has its interest as suggesting one of the causes that conduced to Mr. Leech's great success. The perfecting of the art of the wood-engraver came in the very nick of time to help him on, by ensuring that rapidity of publication, which was to him a great encouragement, and to the public an inestimable boon. It ensured freshness and novelty. The whim or fashion of the day might be seen pictured by John Leech even before the public began to notice it much in real life, and the droll story, that belonged to the froth and spray of the passing wave, had not time to become stale before it made matter for a sketch, and might be seen in *Punch's* gallery. In this connection it should be remembered that if Mr. Leech did great things for *Punch*, *Punch* also did great things for him. It gave him a great opportunity such as no artist before him had enjoyed, and which he alone was able to seize. Newspaper art was an utter novelty, and he gave to that novelty the dignity, the grace, and the nameless attractions of genius. Week after week there flowed from his pencil an endless succession of scenes—now of high life and now of low life; now of indoors and now of the street and the public place; now of the town and now of the country; now of England and now of foreign lands; now of summer and now of winter; now of sunshine and now of storm. He caught the very image of his time, and fixed it in his sketches with such a combined strength and delicacy, that one knew not which most to admire in him, his innate sense of beauty or his firm adhesion to accuracy. Not content to represent our social life in its essence as he found it, he insisted on representing it with all its surroundings and a multiplicity of little details, which many of us hardly notice. If he had to depict ladies, he not only took care to draw them well and to show their minds in

their faces, he was scrupulously exact as to their toilet, he knew all about the furniture in the room, and what knick-knacks of things should be on the table, and he did not forget the dog, whether it was a toy-terrier or a saddle-backed Skye, or a comical turnspit, such as he himself cherished. He was even happier when he got out-of-doors, and led us into the country. What scenes he drew of the hunting-field, of deer-stalking among Highland hills, and of fishing in Highland glens! His first care, of course, was given to the tenants of the scene—to the men and the horses. He delighted in horses, and he introduced us at his pleasure to the clowns of the fens, to Yorkshire farmers and gamekeepers, or to Highland gillies. But the scenery was a constant wonder, and seemed to give him endless enjoyment. It was a wonder that he could represent so much with means so slight. You had the rocky river and the boisterous sea; you had a dull day in the ploughed lands of the long, far flats, and you had a bright one on the slopes of the smooth South Downs; you were lost amid the trimmest English lanes and hedgerows, or you rested in the shadow of the picturesque pollards by the river side. With the means at his disposal, he could do no more than suggest; but he suggested with a felicity of touch that made the scene at once apparent.

Any one looking over his sketches, noting how numerous are those contributed to *Punch* alone, remembering also that he was ever engaged in illustrating other works—Mr. Dickens's Christmas Books, *The Ingoldsby Legends*, *The Bon Gaultier Ballads*, *Punch's Pocket-Book*, *Once a Week*, *The Tour in Ireland*, *Soapy Sponge*, *Plain or Ringlets*, *Handley Cross*, *Ask Mamma*, together with many more publications which it is impossible here to enumerate—and then again bearing in mind how full of matter his sketches were, how infinite in their variety, must see clearly that to accomplish what he did, Mr. Leech had to work very hard. He was ever at work, both consciously and unconsciously. Well known to his friends was a certain little pocket-book in which he was always making notes. If he did not actually make notes pencil in hand, still he was studying in other ways. When he went to enjoy a day's hunting anywhere, perhaps he would pick out some fox-hunter that took his fancy, and would keep behind him the whole day, watching all his attitudes in the saddle, and marking every item of his dress to the last button and buttonhole. Now because his business was thus connected with his pleasure, and because he was very quick in forming his conceptions of pictures, some of his friends were inclined to be sceptical as to the hardness of his work. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose that pleasant labour is not labour, and that what is done rapidly involves but a slight effort. All concentrated endeavour wears the mind, and it was well said by a painter to one who underrated the worth of a picture produced in a week, "You forget that I have spent my whole life in learning to paint that picture in so short a time." But Mr. Leech's working was more rapid in appearance than it was in reality. He formed his ideas very quickly; he saw his way in a moment. Mr. Samuel Lucas

went to him once for a little sketch, which he wanted as the initial letter to a tale that was about to appear in *Once a Week*. It was the story of a clown who had to crack his jokes in a circus while his wife was in her dying agonies. She was a columbine who, standing on horseback, used to leap through hoops. On the occasion of one of her leaps she missed her footing, fell to the ground, and injured herself fatally. To illustrate this tale a sketch was wanted, suggesting the initial letter I. Before Mr. Lucas had ceased speaking the thing was done. "I think this is what you want," said Mr. Leech, showing him the first draught of the following sketch, which, by the way, is remarkable not alone for its instantaneousness, but also as an indication of what he, who generally took a humourous view of life, could achieve in the direction of tragedy. See, again, how perfect, and how vital, is the slight suggestion of the horse underneath. When Mr. Mark Lemon went to him with the suggestion of a cartoon for *Punch*, he was always struck with Mr. Leech's rapidity of understanding. He would sometimes knock off one of his large cartoons in an hour, or an hour and a half, while the friendly editor chatted with him over a cigar. But although Mr. Leech was thus rapid in his conceptions, he very rarely trusted himself to draw in the first instance upon the wood; and the artist who first of all makes a tolerably complete sketch upon paper, then laboriously transfers the sketch to the block by means of a tracing, and then again minutely fills in the details upon the wood, can scarcely be described as a very rapid worker. At all events it is plain that his work gave him an immense deal of minute trouble. One consequence of this, however, is that nearly all his first sketches upon paper remain, and these will probably be soon exhibited to the public. They are of course rough in comparison with his finished work, but in all their roughness they are sometimes even more powerful. In the very last work on which he was engaged the contrast between the bold lines of his first sketch and the minute elaboration of the picture, in so far as it has been transferred to the wood, is more remarkable than ever. This careful elaboration will, to some extent, be seen in the copy of it which we have been permitted to publish. The block itself is too precious a possession

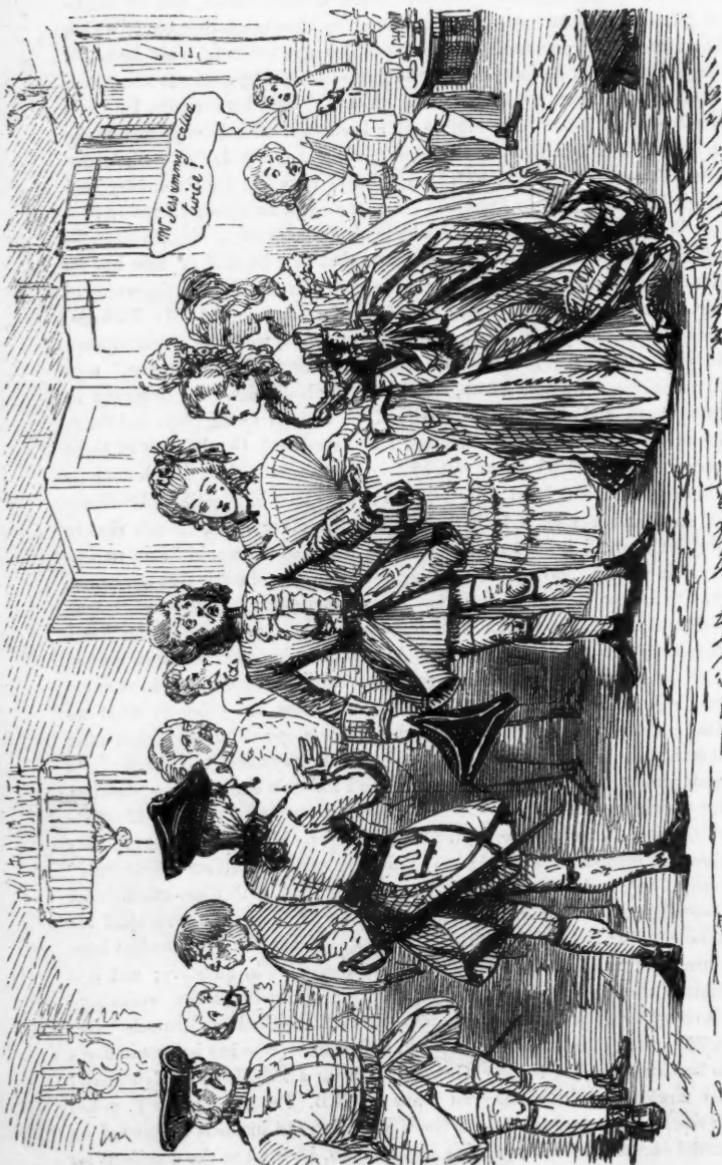




AN AFTERNOON ON THE FLAG—COMPLIMENTS.

to be cut by the engraver; but Mr. Mark Lemon, junior, has, by means of photography, succeeded in transferring its lines to another block which has been cut for our use. The scene is one of a series of what he called Dogleaves, which he intended for the forthcoming Almanac. It is entitled, "An Afternoon on the Flags—Compliments;" and between the lady and the dog there is the faint outline of a huntsman who is supposed to be saying—"She is a Beautiful Creechur, ain't she, my Lady? She's our great Favourite—and Lord Oxfencer always says that for Symmetry and High Breeding, and for Beautiful Nose, she's just like your Ladyship!"

We have said that Mr. Leech's life and character are in his own *Sketches of Life and Character*. Any anecdote that can be told of him has its double in his own works. Suppose we give this anecdote in the words of Mr. Charles Dickens. He was very fond of a boy known to Mr. Dickens, an extraordinarily small boy, but of great spirit, who was a midshipman in the navy. "Whenever this boy came home from a cruise," says Mr. Dickens, "he and Leech, and never anybody else, used to go out in great state, and dine at the Garrick Club, and go to the play, and finish in an exemplary way with kidneys and harmony. On the first of these occasions, the officer came out so frightfully small, that, Leech told us afterwards, he was filled with horror when he saw him eating his dinner at the Garrick with a large knife. On the other hand, he felt that to suggest a small knife to an officer and a gentleman would be an unpardonable affront. So after meditating for some time, he felt that his course was to object to the club knives as enormous and gigantic; to remonstrate with the servant on their huge proportions, and with a grim dissatisfaction to demand small ones. After which, he and the officer messed with great satisfaction, and agreed that things in general were running too large in England." But incidents like these are precisely what we find pictured in his pages; and his friends, pointing to sketch after sketch, can say, "I told him that;" "This happened to himself;" "I was present when he came upon so and so." We select two sketches, for which we are indebted to Messrs. Bradbury and Evans, to illustrate this, not because they are greatly superior to others, but because they show his manner of working. The first is called "Private Theatricals" (see p. 754), and appeared in the Almanac for 1854, with these words under it—"Dismay of Mr. James Jessamy on being told that he will spoil the Whole Thing if he doesn't shave off his Whiskers." The incident happened to himself; it is his own whiskers that were in question; and it is himself that he is here making fun of. So again but a few weeks ago, there appeared in *Punch* the sketch of "A Little Scene at Brussels" (see p. 755), with these words underneath, "T-MPK-NS (who has just come down to breakfast): Here! I say, Garsong! I want a kelkchose for dejewnay! der Korfee, and des Hoofs, you know! (N.B. The stout party T. pokes in the ribs is a wealthy Belgian Swell.)" Here the incident is founded on actual occurrence. During this last summer, he went to the continent for

A LITTLE SCENE AT DRURY LANE
PRIVATE THEATRICALS



the benefit of his health, in company with Mr. Elmore; and it was he himself who made the mistake of addressing a Belgian gentleman as the



waiter. But whereas he himself was tall, he pictures the hero of the escapade as short; whereas he was a gentleman in all his ways, he represents the said hero with the manners of a "gent," terrible in his French.



"NOW JACK, MY BOY! THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE; WE'VE TEN MILES
TO GO TO COVER."

The type of an immense number of these sketches is to be found in his letters; and one must conceive of them as a form of published letter. He writes to a young but most distinguished artist with whom he had formed a close friendship, "When do you return? Mind, you present yourself here directly you come back. You are of course something like this, by this time;" and then on opposite pages of his letter he draws, with pen and ink, two prodigious portraits of his friend, that illustrate the



curious felicity with which he could give a likeness from memory, and preserve the likeness too, while confounding it with extravagances that have no existence in fact. So when he writes to another friend to appoint a day for hunting, he must wind up with a sketch of what is likely to take place on the morning of the hunt. He was troubled with a want of sleep, and indicates, on the sketch, how difficult it will be to wake him up. Now, what we have here in the rough, in his letters, we have highly finished in his published works. Representing scenes of private life, they

have the same relation to art that a man's letters have to literature. They are his mode of correspondence, and they have the biographical character of a correspondence.

If we are at liberty to describe Mr. Leech's work as a kind of epistolary art, a pictorial correspondence, this phrase will have the further advantage of indicating the singularity of his position as an artist. His position is as singular in this century as that of Hogarth was in the last. Sometimes these two men are compared together ; but, indeed, it is impossible to measure them by a common standard. One cannot compare a first-rate letter-writer, like Madame de Sevigné, with a first-rate dramatist, like Molière. We cannot put an idyllic poet on the same level with an epic one. Mr. Leech used a very humble medium for the expression of his thinking ; and he adopted it for better, for worse. It had the disadvantage of being unfit for the higher exercises of pictorial genius ; while, on the other hand, it had the advantage of appealing quickly to prodigious multitudes, and of thus enabling the artist, from week to week for twenty years, to play directly, and without intermission, on the hearts of a whole nation.

And that is the secret of our friend's success ; he had gone to our hearts, and had become part of our life. He had in this century discovered, or at least turned to account, a new method of art, as Hogarth had done in the last century. Hogarth was the first great English painter. Before him a school of painting was impossible in this country, because all great art was identified either with the Catholic faith, and, therefore, as connected with many superstitions, was not to be tolerated by good Protestants ; or with classical mythologies and histories, and, therefore, had little hold on the people. Hogarth made art popular among us by directing it to the incidents of domestic life, and by taking care to charge his pictures even to oppression with a moral purpose. He made art intelligible and attractive to a people who had begun to forget what great pictorial art was ; and engravings of his pictures spread far and wide over the country. But Mr. Leech in the present century drew still nearer to the popular feeling. He found a new way through the instrumentality of *Punch*. Hogarth's way was not entirely his own. He had learnt it from the Dutch masters, and his originality consisted in seeing that by endowing pictures of domestic life with keen moral purpose he could adapt them to the English mind. So Mr. Leech found a way made for him, but he had the merit of instantly seizing on it and making the most of it. His work has in it the necessary limitations of comedy ; it was not often that in the pages of a journal professedly humorous, he could touch tragedy. But allowing for these limitations—the limitation of subject imposed by comedy, and the limitation of treatment imposed by the nature of his means—it is impossible not to be struck with his reach as an artist—with the range of his knowledge, with the accuracy of his eye, with the perfect sympathy that entered into all his touches, with his clearness and simplicity of expres-

sion, with the sense of beauty and the love of nature that regulated all his perceptions. Certainly no man before him, with means so slight, had ever accomplished so much, whether we measure his achievement by the amount of expression in his drawings, or by their effect on the popular mind.

And he who had made himself our friend by the incessant correspondence which he kept up with us, has passed away—destroyed by overwork, and the impossibility of finding rest. He had become nervous, sleepless, easily disturbed by noise, and latterly his nervousness had taken the form of *angina pectoris*, or in plain English, breast-pang. Although this is a very dangerous malady, which is said to destroy life by causing spasm of the heart; and although it was necessary to warn Mr. Leech against all excitement—as riding, quick walking, and overwork—it was not supposed that he was in immediate danger; and if he could only find rest and freedom from anxiety, great hopes were entertained of his recovery. He was naturally, however, of anxious mind, and in his weak state of health was easily overset. A barrel-organ was to him an instrument of fierce torture; if a dog barked in the night, he would watch with morbid wakefulness to catch again the tormenting yelp; and a wheelwright, that at early dawn plied his hammer near him, he had to bargain into silence. At the same time, a generous disposition had led him to undertake responsibilities which wore him down. On the day before his death, he wrote to his kind friend and publisher, Mr. Evans, that he had been suffering from “much annoyance and disturbance.” The end of the sad story has been told in the newspapers, but one cannot help dwelling on it, in the knowledge that if Mr. Leech could have found rest and peace, he might have lived to delight us for many years to come. On that Friday before his death, Dr. Quain assured him that his only chance was in rest; and when, a few hours before he fainted away, he asked Mr. Hutchinson’s permission to work at some drawing—that last unfinished sketch of the lady and the dog—it was given only on the express understanding that it would be an amusement to him. Three hours afterwards, no physician being near him—Dr. Quain being out of town, and his other medical friends having left him to rest—his pain returned to him, and in the anguish of it he died. His pain came to him almost while he was in the act of catering for our entertainment, and he who has done more than perhaps any of his contemporaries, not even excepting Mr. Dickens (for no art of words can in this respect keep pace with that of the pencil), to amuse the present generation, died in agonies which he said were too great to be endured. The news of his death rang through London with a dismal shock. “There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead.” In what home was not John Leech an inmate? Personally he shunned observation; he was always very quiet and retiring; and few but friends could recognize his handsome face and fine tall figure in a crowd—not even when he rode

past on Red Mullet, a pony for him at least so diminutive that people declared it was not a pony at all, but Punch's dog Toby doing duty for one. He, however, who was so little known to sight, was, for a private person, the best known man in England, and his death was a death in our homes.

What makes his departure most painful is the knowledge that, notwithstanding his great stature as an artist, he had not risen to his full height. Every year he surpassed himself in the originality of his conceptions and in the delicacy of his workmanship. He had always something new for us, and his hand became every day more and more subtle. Moreover, latterly he aspired to find expression in oil-colours—in the highest language of pictorial art. It is true that his mastery of colour was imperfect, and that he did not pretend to claim for his paintings a higher designation than that of sketches in oil. He was in oil-painting but a beginner; and he who had all his life been accustomed to think in black and white, and chiefly in outline, found not a little difficulty in dealing with the new vehicle. Still, his success in it was great enough to inspire himself and his friends with much hope of what he might hereafter accomplish. That hope is now dead, and it seems as if in John Leech there had died another John Leech even greater than he.

JOHN H. S. QUICK,

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